POLICE · BUDGET · EDITION

EDITED · BY HAROLD FURNISS

FAMOUS CRIMES

PAST AND PRESENT

ONE · PENNY

FINDING THE BODY OF MR. BRIGGS.

(See the Story of the Murder, by Muller, on the North London Railway.)

Vol. V. No. 58.

MULLER
The MURDERER.

His slaying of Mr. Briggs on the North London Railway; his flight to America, pursuit, capture, and confession as he was launched into eternity.

"There is no confessor like unto Death!
Thou canst not see him, but he is near;
Thou needest not whisper above thy breath
And he will hear."

—LONGFELLOW, "The Golden Legend," Part V.

PART I.

IT has often been a source of wonder to criminologists for what small, even paltry, gain the murderer will place his own life in jeopardy. The case which we are about to relate is a capital example of this peculiarity which seems inherent in the least ferocious class of criminal slayers. One can understand a burglar taking a life to save himself from capture, or the jealous slaughtering of the half-frenzied lover who imagines that by killing his rival he can secure the coveted maiden for himself, even the brutal murders of children for their insurance money, or to conceal the results of sin, have something intelligible about them, much as we are shocked by the deed, but that a man should deliberately murder a stranger to gain possession of a watch and chain, and leave his money, almost passes belief, yet that very thing happened on the 8th of July, 1864.

On that day a first-class passenger was about to enter the train which leaves Fenchurch Street on the North London line, at 9.45 in the evening, at Hackney Wick Station. He opened the door, and, being a little stiff, placed his hand on the seat of the carriage to assist him in entering, when he found that his hand was wet. He drew back and looked at his hand by the light of the platform lamp, when, to his horror, he found that it was covered with blood. Immediately he called the guard of the train and pointed out to him the state of the carriage. The official entered the compartment and found that not only the cushion but the floor, window, and sides were besmeared with gore, and in some places there was quite a pool of still warm blood to be seen. In the carriage were a hat, a heavy walking stick, and a small leather bag.

Of course, the guard at once took charge of these articles and locked the compartment. Just as he had done so some ladies who were in the adjoining carriage called him and complained that just after the train left Bow, the preceding station, some blood had spurted through the carriage window and soiled their dresses. At first it was thought that someone had committed suicide in the carriage and thrown himself out of the window, and with a view to the body being recovered, the guard telegraphed to the stationmaster at Bow to stop the traffic till a search had been made for the body.

But while this was going on at Hackney Wick Station, a light engine was on the line, returning from Hackney Wick to the Bow locomotive works for the night. When the engine was near the railway bridge over Ducket's Canal, by the side of the Mitford Castle Tavern, which fronts the Tower Hamlets Volunteer parade ground, the driver and his mate saw something lying in the six-foot way or passage between the up and down line. The driver, by name Eskins, thought that it was the body of a dog, but the stoker declared that it was a human being. The light was bad, for it was about twenty minutes past ten and rather a thick night. The engine passed the object before it could be brought to a standstill, but as soon as possible the stoker, Brinchley, got down, and taking the engine lamp with him walked back to see what was on the line. When he reached the spot he found that the mysterious object was the body of an elderly gentleman, saturated with blood and perfectly unconscious. Brinchley hailed the driver, and then ran down the embankment to the Mitford Castle public-house to get assistance.

Several persons were in the house, and, with the landlord, Mr. White, they went on to the line to remove the unfortunate gentleman to the tavern. In doing so they nearly lost their own lives through a down train which had left Bow before the stationmaster had received notice to block the line. The gentleman was carried to the tavern and laid on a couch, and then the landlord sent for the police and for medical aid. Three doctors were soon in attendance, and with the police an examination of the wounded man's injuries was made.

He was completely collapsed and insensible, though on one or two occasions he gave a slight sign of returning consciousness, notably when the constable commenced to search his pockets, when he made a gesture as if to prevent him from doing so. His garments were covered with blood, and there was distinct evidence of foul play. The left ear was nearly severed from the head, and just above it was a very deep wound which could be seen to penetrate the brain. There were several other severe injuries to the head, but the rest of the unfortunate man seemed to have escaped injury. As it was the medical men declared that it was a wonder that he was still alive.

The sufferer had no watch or chain on, but there was the hook of a gold chain which evidently had been torn off, hanging from the waistcoat buttonhole. Inspector Kerressey, of the K Division, from Bow Station, soon arrived and searched the pockets of the wounded man to find out from his papers who he was and where his friends could be communicated with. In the breast pocket were several letters addressed to: "T. Briggs, Esq., Messrs. Robarts, Curtis, and Co., Lombard Street, E.C." The firm mentioned was then a well-known firm of bankers and accordingly the inspector despatched a messenger to the bank at once, to find out where the gentleman lived. He had not much hope of success, as it was Saturday night and he did not know whether Messrs. Curtis kept a night-watchman; however, a man was found at the bank who had access to the address book of the firm, and it was

found that Mr. Briggs lived at 5, Clapton Square, Hackney. Thither an officer was sent to break the news to the victim's family. His wife was in very delicate health, and it was feared that the shock might kill her, so she was not told of the accident which had befallen Mr. Briggs, but his son was at home and, accompanied by several other members of the household and the family doctor, Mr. Toulmin, went immediately to the Mitford Castle, where a painful scene took place, but beyond a slight trembling movement when he was called by name, Mr. Briggs gave no sign of recognition. Everything that could be done at the tavern was done for the sufferer, but news, especially of a tragic nature, soon spreads, and the public-house was besieged by an excited crowd of people inquiring what had happened and forming theories of their own. It was therefore deemed advisable to move Mr. Briggs to his own house, where he lingered till nearly midnight on the following day, and then expired.

From Mr. Briggs, jun., the police learnt that when his father left the house on the Saturday morning he was wearing a heavy albert chain and a massive, old-fashioned gold chronometer, and had also a gold-rimmed eyeglass attached to a hair guard. When the constables came to search the first-class carriage, which had been detached at Hackney Wick, part of a hair guard was found on the floor, and young Mr. Briggs identified it as part of his father's property. The bag and walking-stick which were in the carriage were also identified, but Mr. Briggs stoutly declared that the hat was not the one which his father was wearing and was of a shape which he never wore.

To the police it was now obvious that the case was not one of suicide, and that robbery was the motive, though the only valuables which the murderer appeared to have taken were the watch and chain, for a subsequent search disclosed the eyeglass in one of the victim's pockets, together with about four pounds in gold and a quantity of valuable papers. The first thing to do was to form some theory as to how the deed was accomplished, and to this end several of the best detectives in London were deputed by Sir Richard Mayne, who was at that time Commissioner of Police.

There was no difficulty in determining where the encounter took place, for most of the blood was situated in one corner of the carriage, which showed clearly enough where Mr. Briggs must have sat when he was attacked by his assailant. But that corner was on the opposite side of the carriage to that out of which the unconscious man must have been thrown, and that he was dragged across the carriage was shown by the smeared blood on the arm-rests. On the door itself there was the imprint of a blood-stained hand, and on the cushions of the carriage marks where the butcher had wiped his hands and scraped the blood off them against the binding of the seats. In those days the method of detection by means of the imprints of fingers was unknown, or the clue would have been a valuable one. As it was, the only thing which the detectives had to work on were the hat, which must have belonged to the murderer, and a description of the watch and chain.

We must now see what was the history of the gentleman who had been murdered. By profession he was a banker's clerk, and had been for very many years in the employ of

AN EXAMINATION OF THE WOUNDED MAN'S INJURIES.

Messrs. Robarts, Curtis, and Co. He was a most trustworthy man, and highly esteemed by all who knew him. He was nearly seventy years of age, but was very powerful for his years, and, if prepared for an attack, must have proved a formidable opponent, for he was a large man. On the night of the murder he had been dining with his niece and her husband, Mr. Buchan, at Peckham, and when he left went by omnibus to Fenchurch Street Station, where he caught the 9.45 train. He was recognised on the platform by one of the ticket-collectors, to whom he had been known as a season-ticket holder for many years, and had spoken to him. That was all that the police could find out about the deceased when the inquest was opened on the Monday following the murder, and our readers will admit that they really had very little to go upon.

On July 11 the inquest on the body of the murdered clerk was opened at Dalston before Dr. Humphreys, Coroner for Middlesex. The jury were treated to a practical demonstration of the murderer's work when they viewed the body, for the doctor in charge of the case went the length of exposing every wound and pointing out how

it must have been produced, a rather gruesome proceeding which is now not customary at inquests. The evidence taken was of a purely formal character. Mr. Briggs, junior, identified the body, and said his father was in the habit of wearing a massive gold chain of a particular pattern and the watch, which we have already described, together with gold eyeglass and a diamond ring. The ring and glass had been found, but the watch and chain were missing. He knew nothing more about the case. He was followed by the landlord of the public-house and by several persons who assisted in carrying the body from the rails to the tavern. A constable of the K Division said that he was the first member of the police called to see the victim. He found that the shirt-front was very much rumpled and one stud missing; there also seemed to have been some attempt to loosen the collar, or the murdered man had been dragged by it. Blood was over everything, which made it difficult to examine the body without disturbing the dress. In the pockets he found £4 10s. in gold, some silver, a silver snuff-box, silk handkerchief, and a number of papers and

He was recognised on the platform.

letters. The diamond ring was on the little finger. Another constable produced the walking-stick, hat, and portion of hair-guard found in the railway carriage, and Mr. Briggs said that, with the exception of the hat, the goods were the property of or in charge of his father.

At this point Detective Inspector Tanner, who was specially detailed to investigate the case, rose, and asked the Coroner to adjourn the inquiry at that stage, as, in the interests of justice, it ought not to be pursued further just then. "Sir George Grey," he added, "has consented to a reward of £100 being offered by the Government for information leading to the discovery of the perpetrator of the crime, while the bank with which Mr. Briggs had been connected wished to offer a like reward."

"And what are the railway company going to do, inspector?" queried Mr. Humphreys.

"I have had no instructions from them at present, but doubtless they will offer some additional incentive to discovery." The Coroner then adjourned the inquest before the medical evidence had been taken. It may be here added that the railway company offered a reward similar to the other two, so that the public had a chance of securing all or part of £300 if they could catch the culprit.

The police at once became violently active, and handbills were distributed as soon as they could be printed, while Inspector Tanner and his colleague, Kerressey, employed quite a small army of plain-clothes constables to track the offender. The first thing to be done, of course, was to attempt to find whether the watch and chain had been pawned or not, and to look up the hatter whose name, "J. H. Walker, 49, Crawford Street, Marylebone," was found in the hat of the murderer, to see if he could say to whom he sold it; but at this juncture little information was forthcoming. In a day or two, however, the police discovered that a chain which corresponded to the description of that worn by Mr. Briggs had been exchanged for another gold chain by a young man answering to the following description: "Age about 30; height about 5½ft.; sallow; thin features; a foreigner—supposed German; speaks fair English; dress, black frock-coat and vest, dark trousers, black hat."

These particulars were immediately made public, and on the following day a rumour spread about that an ex-convict named Jones, who had been employed in Messrs. Robarts' bank, and whose punishment was mainly due to the activity of Mr. Briggs, had been seen in the neighbourhood of Hackney Wick on the night of the murder. The police immediately set out to capture the gentleman, but found that he was far from having been in the district on the evening in question, since he had been lying in his grave in Chatham Prison for the last four years. But the activity of the police and the cupidity of the man in the street were soon to produce some tangible result.

A cabman named Matthews noticed his little girl playing with one of those small, white cardboard boxes such as jewellers use to send out articles in. He examined the box, and found on it the address of Mr. Death, a large jeweller in Cheapside. He asked her where she got it from, and she was told that a young friend of the family's, named Muller, had given it to her. At the time he paid no more heed to the matter, but when, on Monday, July 18, he heard from his wife, who was reading the paper, that the name of the jeweller with whom the murderer had exchanged his plunder was the same as that on the box, he immediately drove to the nearest police-station, though it was after ten at night, and brought them the box. Down went the police-sergeant with the cabman to Mr. Death's establishment, and, rousing the old gentleman out of bed, showed him the box. He identified it as one of his own, and said that it was a similar box to the one into which he had placed the chain and ring exchanged for Mr. Briggs's ornament.

The information awakened every spark of enthusiasm in the superintendent and inspector when the party returned to the police station, and at once they made the cabman drive them to the house of Sir Richard Mayne, in Pimlico, where the news was imparted to him. His instructions were for the three man-hunters to search for Inspector Tanner, who had charge of the hat found on the scene of the murder. On the way to the detective's residence the cabman described the hat which Muller used to wear to Superintendent-Inspector Steers, and when the article was shown him by Tanner, his description was found to tally exactly with the real thing. The cabman knew it, for he had purchased it for Muller himself some four months previously.

Matthews then handed to the inspector a slip of paper on which Muller had written, "Franz Muller, 16, Park Terrace, Old Ford, Bow." More important still, the cabman was able to supply the police with a photograph of Muller which that worthy had given him only a week before. Armed with this picture, the whole party returned to the jeweller's shop and awoke Mr. Death for the second time that night. He at once recognised the photo, declaring that he should know the man again anywhere, and that it was to him that he had given jewellery in exchange for Mr. Briggs's chain. From Cheapside the superintendent, the two inspectors—for Tanner had joined the party—and the cabman went to

the Bow address given by the suspected man. Outside the house they waited for some time with the intention of capturing Muller when he came out in the morning to go to his work, but about five o'clock a resident in Park Terrace going out to get some refreshment from the nearest public-house, which had just opened its doors, told them that Muller had indeed lived at No. 16, but that he had left for America a few days ago.

That confirmed the police officers' suspicions, and they rang up the landlord of No. 16 to make inquiries about his late lodger. Mr. Blyth, the landlord, told them that Muller had gone to Canada by the ship "Victoria," which had sailed on the previous Thursday, and that he had received a letter from him despatched by the pilot when that officer left the vessel off Worthing. The letter was dated July 16. Muller could not write English very correctly, but he could speak well. The letter said that up to the time of writing he had been very well, and hoped to return to England in about six months. A fellow-lodger with Muller, named Goodwin, was interrogated by the officers, and readily gave what information he could about the alleged assassin. He said that Muller was born in Cologne in 1839, and on leaving school was apprenticed to a gunsmith, which occupation he followed until his arrival in England some two years previously. A friend of his who was married to the sister of Matthews the cabman had persuaded him to come over to this country.

On arrival in England Muller found that there was little hope of employment in his own trade, and had, therefore, taken lessons in cutting out. He was a very rapid learner, and soon was able to take a place in the workshops of Messrs. Hodgkinson, 43, Threadneedle Street, as a journeyman tailor. He did not work there very long, and left on the 2nd of July, stating that he was going to America. On the Thursday preceding the murder, Muller complained that he had hurt his foot while in the City, alleging that it had been run over by a letter carrier's cart, and on that day and Friday he wore a slipper instead of a boot. On the Saturday of the tragedy Muller was well again, and, to all appearances, in his usual spirits.

On the day of the tragedy Muller left the house about eleven a.m., and was not seen again till Sunday morning, when he came out into the garden and chatted with the landlord in an unconcerned manner. He was wearing the same clothes as he did on the day before, and no stains of blood were noticed on them. During the three following days he remained at 16, Park Terrace, he showed absolutely no trace of nervousness, and was a very pleasant companion. On Wednesday evening he took his clothes away to the vessel on which he was going to sail, and about eight on the following morning he left in company with Goodwin, saying that he would soon be back again, and leaving a photograph of himself behind him. The photo had been taken in Oxford Street during the week of the murder, and was identical with the one which the cabman had given to the police.

On Monday morning Muller went out, and when he returned it was noticed that he was wearing a new gold chain. He was asked about it, and said that he had purchased it for £3 10s. That was the day on which Mr. Death made the exchange with him.

The police next examined Muller's room, and Inspector Steers found neatly "planted" up the chimney the silk lining of the sleeve of a man's coat. The lining had evidently been torn out, and the lower end of the sleeve was stained with blood, which subsequent examination proved to be human blood.

By now it was about nine o'clock in the morning, and the police drove back to Cheapside and fetched Mr. Death, whom they took with them to Bow Street, where the cabman swore to a statement of the above facts before the Chief Magistrate, and the jeweller identified the box as one of his. On this information Mr. Henry felt justified in granting a warrant for the arrest of Muller on the charge of murder, and Inspector Tanner was instructed to execute the same. As it was probable that the fugitive would land in America in preference to Canada, the detective went to the American Ambassador and obtained from him letters asking the American police to render him every assistance.

The murderer had sailed, as we know, on the "Victoria," and the only hope that the police had of landing before that vessel arrived was to catch the American mail, which sailed early on the following morning. Accordingly, Tanner, the jeweller, and the cabman were sent at once to Liverpool, and sailed on Wednesday morning on board the steamer "City of Manchester."

While these people were on their way to the States to capture the criminal, more facts were brought to light by the detectives in London. It was ascertained that on the evening of the murder Muller went about seven o'clock in the evening to the house of Mr. and Mrs. Repsch, in the Minories, and there met a friend of his named Haffa. He left about eight, alone, and was not seen by the Repschs till the Monday following the tragedy, when he came to their house, and Mrs. Repsch noticed that he was wearing a ring, and had got a different hat on from the one which he usually wore. She spoke to him about it, and he said that

He examined the box.

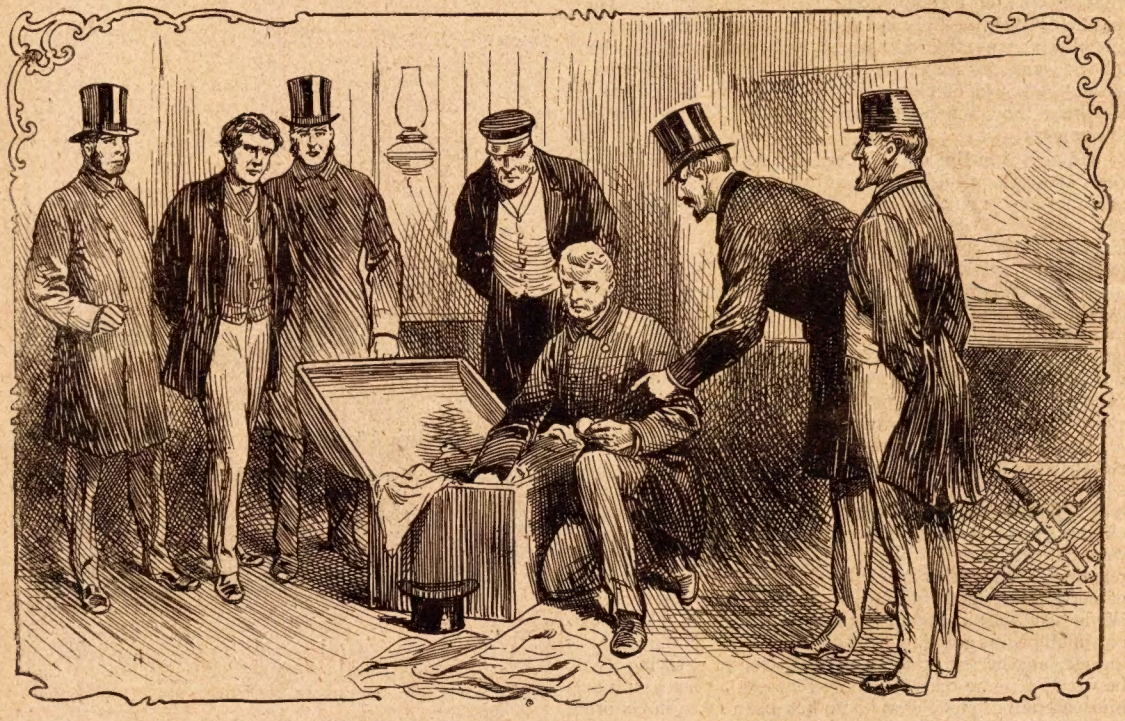
he had bought the hat for 14s. The ring Mrs. Repsch took from him and examined closely. It answered to the description of the one which Muller obtained from Mr. Death. Two days later Muller again came to their house and saw Haffa, with whom he went out.

Haffa and the accused man went to the pawnshop of Mr. Annis, in the Minories, where Muller pawned the gold chain which he had received from Mr. Death for thirty shillings, and on coming out of the shop Haffa gave him twelve shillings for the ticket and also lent him one pound to enable him to get his own watch and chain out of pawn. This took all the money which Muller had with the exception of a shilling. The pair then went to Leicester Square, where Muller managed to pledge his regained watch and chain for four pounds, and, in consideration of a further advance of five shillings from Haffa, gave him that ticket also. Muller then had four pounds six shillings in his possession. He went straight to the London Docks and took his ticket for America, which cost him four pounds, leaving him a very small balance with which to pay for the cab when he took his goods to the ship.

At the first meeting of the adjourned inquest the Coroner again stated that, in the interests of justice, he did not propose to take any evidence that day, but that there was a gentleman present who had given certain information prior to the previous inquiry, and that his evidence would be taken at a later stage. Upon this the foreman of the jury said that, if this gentleman's evidence could be heard then, they would like to hear it, or to have a statement as to its nature. After a brief consultation with the solicitor for the prosecution the Coroner agreed to the witness being called at once, and Mr. Thomas Lee, gentleman, of King Edward's Road, Hackney, was called.

He said that on the night of the murder he was a passenger by the very train in which Mr. Briggs travelled. He saw the deceased sitting with his back to the engine in the first compartment of the first-class carriage next to the engine. He spoke to him, merely saying, "Good night, Mr. Briggs," and Mr. Briggs replied, "Good night, Tom." In the compartment with the deceased he felt sure that there were two other persons, one sitting next to the deround his hat, and noticed that it was not the hat which he had previously been in the habit of wearing. This made the police more certain than ever that the hat was Mr. Briggs's, and they despatched young Mr. Briggs and Inspector Kerressey to New York to give evidence before the court of extradition there. The inquiry was then formally adjourned till the prisoner should be captured and brought back to England.

Like all sensational murders, the "Railway Murder" had a wonderful effect on people of weak intellects, and numerous persons gave themselves up to the police, declaring that they had been concerned in the tragedy either as actual accomplices or as accessories after the fact. This at length became a nuisance, as much time was taken up investigating these foolish statements, but it was not till one worthy named King had "confessed" to the murder of Mr. Briggs, when intoxicated, for which latter offence he was imprisoned without the option of a fine for fourteen days and then remanded four times while his lying confession was investigated, in spite of his statement that it was



HIS BOX WAS BROUGHT INTO THE CABIN AND OPENED.

ceased on the left-hand side and the other directly opposite to him. The train did not go on at once, and it was quite possible that one or both of these persons might have got out before the train started. He himself walked forward to the nearest second-class carriage. He had known Mr. Briggs for three or four years, and felt sure that he could not have been mistaken. After this the inquest was again adjourned for a fortnight.

At the next meeting of the coroner's jury a truncheon, or life-preserver, which had been picked up near the spot where Mr. Briggs's body was found, was produced in court. Mrs. Blyth, wife of Muller's landlord, identified the life-preserver, which was a formidable weapon made of whalebone, indiarubber, and lead, as being the property of Mr. Goodwin, Muller's fellow-lodger. The bludgeon used to hang at the head of Goodwin's bed. The doctor was called who made the post-mortem examination, and he described the position and nature of the wounds, and the facts of the case as we have detailed them were laid before the jury, but one or two additional points were brought to light. Mr. Repsch saw Muller trying to fit a mourning band

false, that these morbid people were persuaded to tell the truth and not pester Scotland Yard.

We must now transport ourselves to America and see what took place there. The "City of Manchester" made a good passage, taking but ten days to reach New York, while the "Victoria" encountered head winds all the way, and was forty-one days on the route instead of her scheduled time of twenty days. The officers and witnesses were, therefore, able to make ample arrangements for the capture of Muller long before the "Victoria" was signalled off Staten Island.

Inspector Tanner was very unwell indeed when he landed, having hurt his back on the voyage, but he at once applied to the authorities, showing his credentials, and Detective Tiernan was detailed to offer every assistance to the British police. The United States law does not permit of a warrant for arrest being granted till an affidavit can be made that the fugitive is within American waters, and to facilitate this being done as soon as possible, Inspector Tanner sent Inspectors Clarke, of Scotland Yard, and Tiernan, of the New York Constabulary, to live on Staten

Island, about eighteen miles from Sandy Hook, and the nearest point where there was then a telegraph, with instructions to communicate with him as soon as any news was heard of the "Victoria." Circulars were also issued to all the pilots offering a reward of sixty dollars to the pilot who boarded the vessel if he would privately ask the captain to keep an eye on Muller, as he was wanted, and at the same time to see that Muller did not know what was in store for him.

On the 24th of August a wire was received from Staten Island, saying that the "Victoria" was in sight in the offing, and Inspector Tanner at once swore to the necessary affidavit and put in the papers from the British Consul attesting it, and Commissioner Newton immediately granted a warrant, which was telegraphed to Tiernan.

In the meantime the pilot had whispered to Captain Champion, of the "Victoria," the fact that Muller was on board his vessel and was wanted for murder. The captain ordered the second mate not to allow Muller out of his sight, but not to let him suspect that he was being watched. It was an anxious time for the skipper; once an excursion steamer passed and someone shouted out: "How are you, Muller? Throw the murderer overboard!" Fortunately only some of the cabin passengers heard the hail, but lest Muller should contemplate jumping overboard, Captain Champion had the boat lowered in readiness.

At the quarantine station there was some little delay in boarding the vessel, and the captain got so nervous that he was about to order Muller to be put in irons, and had, in fact, told the chief mate to get the irons out, when he saw the detectives coming towards the ship with the medical officer. The moment they were introduced to him he said that all was well and that to avoid suspicion he would order all the steerage passengers aft to be examined by the doctor. This he did, and two or three names were first called out and examined. Then the name of Franz Muller was called. He stepped forward readily enough, and was sent into the cabin to be examined. Immediately he got inside, Sergeant Tiernan took him by the arm and told him that he had a warrant for his arrest on a charge of murdering Mr. Briggs in London. Muller turned pale and then recovered himself and said: "I did not do it. I can prove I was not there at all."

He was searched and some silver and a few keys found on him. Then his box was brought into the cabin and opened. In it was found a black hat bearing the name of "Digance, Hatter," on the inside, and at the bottom of the box there was a gold watch, sewn up in a little cotton bag. Muller declared that he had bought the watch from a pedlar on the London dockhead for £4 15s. and had purchased the hat in Petticoat Lane for 14s.

During the rest of the voyage to New York he was confined in a cabin in charge of the police, and when the vessel anchored off New York, Inspector Tanner boarded her. The interest taken in the capture was intense in New York, and boats flocked round the ship filled with excursionists who wished to catch a glimpse of the prisoner. To prevent this as far as possible, Tanner had Muller kept on board for that night, and early next morning placed him with eleven other emigrants in a cabin and brought in Mr. Death. The jeweller instantly pointed out Muller as the man for whom he had changed the chain taken from Mr. Briggs, and Matthews identified him also. Then he was taken to the Mulberry Police Station and formally charged.

Later in the day he was brought before Commissioner Newton and the charge on which extradition was asked for preferred against him. There was some delay at the commencement of the proceedings as the counsel who had been assigned him had not put in an appearance, and after waiting some time the Commissioner assigned Mr. Blankman and Mr. Shaffer to defend Muller. Mr. Marbury appeared to support the extradition.

The case was opened by Mr. Marbury, who read the clause of the Extradition Treaty under which the warrant was applied for, and said he proposed to put in the depositions taken in England. To this the prisoner's counsel objected, saying that in a charge of such gravity no ex parte affidavits could be accepted as evidence, but the Commissioner decided that as the depositions were certified by the American Minister, they were competent evidence. The case, as sworn to in England, was then read to the court. Inspector Tanner then verbally repeated the case as he personally knew it, and was followed by Inspector Kerressey, who gave his version of the matter. At the end of Inspector Kerressey's evidence Mr. Shaffer asked if he could swear to the signature of the United States Minister, Mr. Adams.

The inspector said that he could not, as he did not know Mr. Adams.

"I should think," interposed Mr. Marbury, "that Counsel Shaffer could prove the signature himself, seeing that Mr. Adams was his own candidate for the Vice-Presidentship not long ago."

"Possibly so," returned Mr. Shaffer, "but as I have never helped to hang a client of mine before, I do not intend to begin now." On this the Commissioner said that the seal of the Legation was sufficient proof of the genuineness of the signature.

The Jeweller instantly pointed out Muller.

Mr. Death then told the story of the exchange of chains, and said that when he had valued the chain brought him he found that it was of more value than the one the prisoner had selected, so he asked him what he would take for the balance, which was about five shillings. The prisoner replied that he would have a ring, and a plain one, set with a white cornelian, was shown him, which he took. He had not the least doubt of the prisoner's identity. At the time he purchased the chain he had not heard of the murder, but when he read of it he was struck by the fact that it lacked the hook or bar. He then communicated with the police.

Matthews was next called. He said that he had been friendly with the prisoner for a long time—some two years, perhaps. One day the prisoner picked up his hat and said, "That's a nice hat you have got." The witness told him to try it on, and if it fitted him, he would get him one like it. Prisoner did so, and found that the hat was a little too small for him. Accordingly, Matthews got him a similar one, but a little larger. The hat was made to order by a Mr. Walker, a hatter in Marylebone. He had seen the hat found in the

carriage in which the murder was committed, and was sure it was the hat he had bought for the prisoner.

The detective who arrested the prisoner on board the "Victoria" described the arrest and the search in his box. The watch which he found there he produced in court. He noticed that it was made in Hackney, in which district the murdered man lived.

That closed the case for the extradition, and the court adjourned for two days. When Commissioner Newton sat again, Mr. Shaffer applied for a long adjournment to allow him to obtain evidence from England as to where the prisoner was on the night of the murder. He said that the case had not been proved in England, and that, therefore, it did not come under the treaty which his opponent had quoted.

Mr. Marbury opposed the adjournment on the ground that the case could not be proved in England unless the prisoner was sent there. He submitted that sufficient evidence had been produced to establish a primâ facie case, and that had the Commissioner to commit the prisoner for trial in New York he would not have the least hesitation in doing so. The Commissioner was only establishing the fact that there was a probability of the prisoner having committed the crime charged against him, and he thought that the case was sufficiently made out. This view Commissioner Newton took, and said that if there had been the least doubt in his mind he would gladly have given the prisoner the benefit of the doubt and released him, but he could find no loophole for the exercise of mercy, and he would therefore sign the warrant of extradition to London, which he accordingly did. On the 31st of August Inspector Tanner received the warrant, but he did not take formal possession of the prisoner till the morning of the 3rd of September, on which day he took Muller on board the s.s. "Etna," of the Inman Line, which was about to sail for Liverpool.

Arrangements had previously been made by the police for Muller's deportation. The whole of the hospital of the vessel was assigned to him and his guardians, and everything was done to make him comfortable. When he was taken on board, Tanner told him that it was customary to iron prisoners who were charged with murder, but that if he would promise to submit himself to his warders and not make any attempt to escape, he would spare him that indignity. Muller replied that he was very thankful for the inspector's kindness, and would behave quietly. He was well supplied with books, and well fed, while his head gaoler frequently had long conversations with him.

The public eagerly followed the details of the proceedings in America, and the one topic of conversation was the latest news of Muller, the criminal thus being elevated to the position of a hero. The German Legal Protection and Aid Society took the case up on behalf of Muller, and appointed counsel to defend him, not because they believed him innocent, but to insure that their countryman should have every assistance in his fight for life.

As the day of arrival in England approached the public demanded all sorts of particulars about Muller, and it may be said that it was at this time that the American system of sensational journalism was introduced into this country. What the prisoner had eaten while in the Tombs Prison, what books he read, how he slept, what his appearance was like—all was served up for the first time in Yankee fashion for the delectation of morbid men. The more dignified papers protested against the innovation, and sneered at the "poor German tailor" who had been raised from obscurity to become the hero of the hour; but their protests and gibes alike were disregarded.

A length a telegram was received saying that the "Etna" had reached Liverpool, and that the murderer might be expected in London at any moment. All through a wet night a vast crowd waited outside Euston Station on the off-chance of catching a momentary glimpse of Muller, and varied the monotony of the wait by singing a doggrel, commencing, "Oh, Muller, he's the man!" to one of the then popular song tunes.

The police, however, were very considerate, and did not wish their captive to be exposed to insult unnecessarily, and disappointed the watchers by removing Muller from the train at Camden Station and driving him privately to Bow Street in a hansom. But it was at Bow Street Police Court that the most extraordinary scenes were witnessed. Tickets had been issued for the court much as if it was to be a Royal entertainment, and they were as much prized as opera tickets. On the bench with the magistrate, Mr. Flowers, sat a crowd of distinguished people, foremost among whom was Prince Humbert, Crown Prince of Italy, who, when king, met his death at the hands of an assassin. Thus the trial of the tailor was graced by royalty.

TO BE CONCLUDED.

The Escape of Don Estevan de Xeres.

A STORY OF THE INQUISITION.

"Let no adversity tear off the wings of Hope,
Neither let prosperity obscure the light of prudence."
—BLAIR, "On Hope."

PART I.

IT is a most extraordinary fact that the Inquisition, with all its terrors of torture, its devilish dealings under the cloak of religion and its murderous assaults upon the innocent, was not infrequently made a tool of by unscrupulous individuals in order to work out their infamous ends when revenge or robbery was the motive. It is not our intention to dwell upon the modes of punishment inflicted by the wretches who controlled the workings of the machinery of the Inquisition, nor to dive into its history; all that will be dealt with in a specially-prepared paper upon the subject in due course. We purpose narrating a story which will prove how this vile and atrocious tribunal not unwillingly lent itself to the would-be murderer and robber in order to add to the already well-filled coffers of its treasury.

Our romances and novels afford us frequent highly-coloured inquisitorial scenes, in which horrors are heaped together, to the exclusion, as might be supposed, of any higher interest. The following relation of facts must, however, be accepted in the sober garb of truth, and will be found probably one of the most interesting tales of its class connected with this extraordinary tribunal.

In the early part of the eighteenth century there resided in Mexico a wealthy merchant by name Don Estevan de Xeres. A man of gentle birth, and a native of Madrid, he had when a young man left Spain to seek his fortunes in the new world discovered by his illustrious countryman. There he had built himself a colossal fortune, but unfortunately a domestic affliction—the loss through fever of his wife and only daughter—deprived him of the happiness of enjoying it.

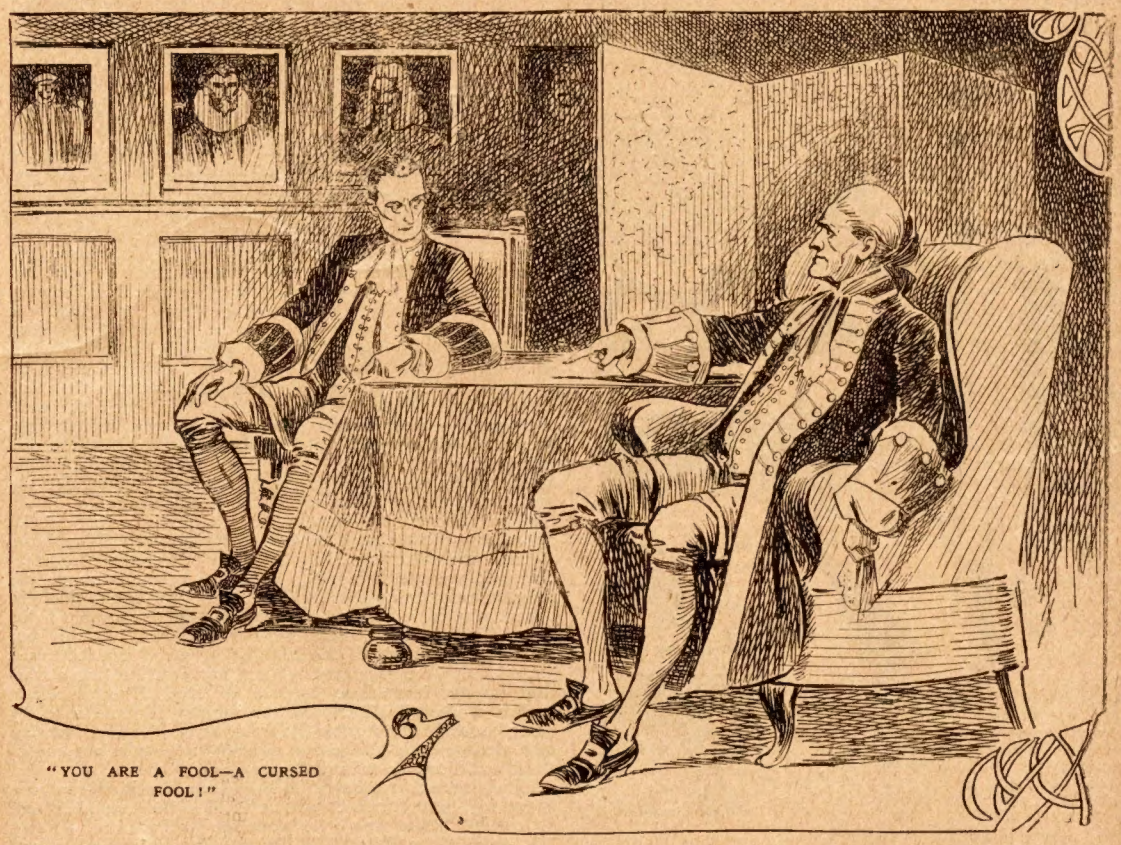
Beloved by everybody who worked for him upon his vast estates and respected by his neighbours, he was a fine specimen of the old Spanish don, possessing all the pride of his race, but a kind-heartedness and charitable disposition which made him loved by all who knew him.

Amongst the most faithful servants and particular favourites of Don Estevan was a young creole, about twenty-five years of age, whose name was Zamora. His mother and father, who had for many years worked upon the don's estates, died when he was an infant, so the child was brought up in Estevan's house, educated by madam personally, and eventually became his master's valet and confidential servant. That which made the Mexican merchant more attached to him was the circumstance that Zamora

had saved the life of his little daughter whilst she was riding with her mother, when her spirited mustang bolted with her, and the young creole stopped it at the risk of his own life.

After the loss of his family Don Estevan took such a liking to Zamora that he treated him more as his own son than a servant. He was inseparable from him. He was taught music and languages, becoming sufficiently refined to enter even the highest class society of Spain, having a knowledge of that language, Portuguese, French and Italian. He took a leading part in the conduct of the don's estate, and, in a word, was his right-hand man and constant companion.

After the death of his wife and daughter the don became so melancholy that Zamora felt the greatest anxiety for his master's condition, being confident that if he remained in Mexico his days would be numbered. He knew that only one thing would save him from his melancholy, and that was change of scene. So, after much persuasion, Zamora induced his master to decide to leave Mexico and return to his native country, it being arranged that the creole should accompany him, spend a few months in Madrid, and then return to dispose of the estates, which were enormously rich in silver, when he was to settle down with the don as his trusted friend and companion in the Spanish capital.



"YOU ARE A FOOL—A CURSED FOOL!"

This settled, and in those days there being no banking convenience, it was necessary to travel with the bulk of his riches amongst his personal baggage. They consisted chiefly of gold and diamonds to the value of something like a hundred thousand pounds. This was packed in several strong iron-bound cases, and at an enormous premium was insured with a house of Bordeaux, who in their ordinary way of business divided the risk with one or two of the Spanish and Portuguese insurance brokers. All being satisfactorily arranged, they accordingly shipped for a Spanish port, the captain being fully aware of the valuable part of his cargo, having been notified by the insurance company at Bordeaux. By accident or design, it was never known, the ship—possibly through stress of weather—had to put in to Lisbon. Now this was exceedingly provoking, for Don Estevan had made his arrangements so complete that his agents were to meet the vessel, and had engaged the means for direct transport by road for the Spanish gentleman and his valuable belongings, even having gone so far as to have engaged an escort of carabineers to accompany them to Madrid, for travelling in those days through Spain without protection was by no means safe.

However, they had to make the best of a bad job, and as the ship—so the captain declared—would have to be overhauled before she could put to sea again, it was decided that the property should be landed and that Don Estevan and his companion—for they were unaccompanied—should sojourn in Lisbon until the vessel was fit for sea again.

They were recommended to the house of Don Pedro Castro, who kept a stylish establishment in one of the best quarters of the city, and was in the habit of receiving merchants who were passing through Lisbon, principally those who were concerned in the wine trade. Castro was a busy man in the town, and made himself very conspicuous in municipal affairs, besides being to all appearances a devout Catholic. Yet some of his fellow-townsmen called him hypocrite, and few, if any, of the high class Portuguese gentlemen would associate with him. This was said to be not so much because of Castro himself, but on account of his son, who was a young gentleman of somewhat depraved habits. He had travelled a good deal, had spent a long time in America, and had certainly brought back with him a character that did not entitle him to mix in the best Portuguese society.

Naturally so distinguished a guest as Don Estevan, whose name was known throughout the length and breadth of Spain and Portugal, commanded the greatest attention. Wines of the choicest vintages, a table fit for an emperor, the principal box at the bull-ring, and the finest horses and equipages that could be procured in the city were provided for the Spanish don—and paid for at most exorbitant prices without a murmur.

In such manner on his way home to his native land Estevan Xeres tasted once again of the pleasures and gaieties of civilised life, and Zamora, astonished, captivated, and electrified by the novelties and brilliant scenes which were for the first time revealed to him, was in the seventh heaven of delight.

And so we will leave them to their enjoyment—whilst it

lasts. It will not be long, for there is a dark cloud rising rapidly upon the horizon of this brilliant sky of theirs which is to envelop them like a gigantic pall and shut out, perhaps, their happiness for ever.

It is late one evening about a week after Estevan's arrival in Lisbon. The sun, which has sunk down in a fiery ball behind the hills, has left the sky the colour of burnished copper. There is evidently a storm brewing.

Seated in a small room in the basement are Don Pedro Castro and his son Carlos. There is something of more than ordinary importance under discussion, for they speak in low tones, and the father, from time to time, looks towards the window and then to the door suspiciously. As he rises and throws the heavy red curtains across the latter a flash of lightning illuminates the apartment, followed by a peal of thunder which shakes the very foundations of the house amongst which they sit. The storm has burst, and the rain comes down as a deluge.

Lighting the swinging oil lamp, Pedro Castro throws himself into an easy-chair and lights a cheroot. "I tell you you are a fool—a cursed fool! You always have been, you

The two wretches repaired to the "Mesa."

always will be! You are everlastingly talking to me about your American bowie-knives and your blood-spilling. No, no, son of mine, the blood leaves stains behind it, and the hounds of the law will run you down. Put up your knives. There shall be no bloodshed—nothing to stain the proud name of Castro. You—you are the only one who has tarnished that name, and I'll have none of your murderous deeds in this house!"

And the old man thumped his fist down upon the table and filled himself a great tumbler of red wine.

The young man to whom he addressed his words was a cadaverous-looking fellow, with yellow, jaundice-like complexion. His dark eyes glittered and his face wore a devilish expression. With a grunt, he turned to his father and said, with a sneer, "Bah! You are the fool! Think of the money within our grasp. I'll stop short at nothing. I've been the scapegoat always, and I'll be the catspaw now. Let me do the business, and I'll warrant you I'll show them a pair of heels. If they catch me—well, I am prepared to run the risk."

"No, no," said the elder Castro. "I know something better than all that nonsense. Listen! I have looked into one of the don's boxes—the key was left in one morning whilst he went to the bath-room. There is sufficient there to get us a fortune. It shall be ours, and none shall be the wiser."

And then, sinking his voice, he explained to his son how he would manage the whole business. His scheme was to accuse Estevan before the Inquisition, which he was confident would be a sure way of plundering him of his treasures. He knew well enough that if he could produce sufficient evidence against the don the Inquisitors would seize his person, and the property would be confiscated, whilst the Holy Office would be the only gainers. To avoid that, he conceived the idea that it would be easy enough for him to abstract the box during the interval between the arrest of the merchant and the arrival of the commissioners to put a seal upon his property. This plunder he would secrete, and so long as the don remained captive there would be very little risk of being brought to account upon the subject.

So the two conspirators agreed to this plan of campaign. The son, worthy of such a father, accepted the proposal reluctantly, but, agreeing to share the spoil, he threw himself into the matter.

Now, Carlos Castro had during his travels resided for some time in Mexico, and Don Estevan was not unknown to him. His suggestion to carry out the plot was to make it appear that a violent passion for an Indian beauty had prevailed on him to gratify his mistress and her friends by some acts of adoration towards the sun. As the country was known to Carlos, he would be enabled to mention the scene where this transaction happened, and the witnesses (he amongst the number) who were present upon the occasion. The father was to add to this information that Don Estevan, since his arrival in Lisbon, had neglected to attend the churches, that he continued every day for some hours shut up in his own apartment, in order, probably, to follow without restraint his idolatrous devotions. Furthermore, he would swear that he had surprised him on more than one occasion kneeling at the open window which faces the east. He would also tell of how his suspicions were further confirmed by some peculiar little heathen figures that the don had brought with him and that were placed on a table in his bed-chamber, and which he had strictly commanded the servants of the house not to touch or to disarrange.

Their abominable—and, to the twentieth-century world, ridiculous—plot being thus laid, the two wretches repaired to the "mesa" of the Holy Office to deliver their information. It was well received. The riches of the stranger had been already universally talked about in Lisbon, and the opportunity of seizing upon them was too favourable to be lost. The next day, therefore, the "archers," as the constabulary or guards of the Inquisition were termed, turned out with the "messer grande" at their head holding a warrant for the immediate capture of Don Estevan Xeres, "alive or dead." This was the regular formula of every order issued by the terrible Triumvirate for the apprehension of a victim; even its lightest orders were issued on pain of death to those who infringed them.

The don was returning to his rooms, having been to a grand bull-fight, when he was arrested as he descended from his coach. There was no explanation forthcoming. Simply "by order of the Tribunal." Protestations were useless, and Zamora, who begged that his master might be permitted to enter the house and write letters to many influential grandees with whom he had made acquaintance during his brief sojourn in Lisbon, was rudely pushed aside.

It was indeed a moment of anguish to the young creole. Never before did he feel his love and affection so strong, never did it so nearly approach a filial piety. Knowing Portuguese and Spanish sufficiently well, he learnt the nature of the accusation, but to know what was further about to happen he followed the guards who were conducting his benefactor.

His surmise was only too true. He saw them enter the gates of the Inquisition. The first feeling of horror once over, Zamora's keen, quick wit came to him, and he stood for a moment as motionless as a statue. His resolution was formed instantly: he would save his master's life or share his fate with him. His next reflection was that without money nothing could be done. He, therefore, flew back to the house in which they had been residing, and, being acquainted with every chest wherein the most valuable effects were deposited, he selected that which had been opened and drawn upon for the don's wants in Lisbon, and took from

it a case of diamonds and gold—the very case which had fascinated the avaricious eyes of Pedro Castro—also taking with him a pocket-book containing a number of valuable notes. He descended to the street, unnoticed in the confusion which had been occasioned at the arrest, and, engaging a vehicle, drove to the other side of the town and took a lodging for the night.

There was no sleep for Zamora, though. He was tormented with the most distressing anxieties. He reflected upon the danger to which he would be exposed were he discovered to possess the valuable effects which he was fortunate enough to bring away. The case would be assuredly missed, and suspicion would immediately fall upon him, whilst his absence would still further strengthen it. No doubt by this time there would be a hue and cry after him and the missing box, and all Lisbon would be after him in the morning. He would be charged with having stolen it, and his great project would consequently become abortive, and he would perish as a thief, without his benefactor knowing the true circumstances or receiving the help he was so anxious to find.

A thousand times he asked himself what he should do with that case of diamonds and gold and with the pocket-book and notes, which could, if changed, be so readily identified! Where was he to conceal these valuables? In whom should he confide? To whom should he reveal his important secret?

At length, towards morning, it flashed across his mind. It was an inspiration. He remembered having gone with his master to the house of the French Consul, and his knowledge of that gentleman's language enabled him to understand that there was great friendship existing between them. He would go to him, for he reflected that the Consul was not subject to the powers of the Inquisition, and would be able to advise—perhaps act—without fear of the consequences.

So at daybreak Zamora was up and away with his precious casket. Repairing to the residence of the Consul, he knocked thus early at the door, and, presenting one of his master's cards, desiring an audience at the soonest possible moment on a matter of the most urgent business. He was admitted, and in a quarter of an hour, which seemed like hours to Zamora, the Consul appeared. He told unreservedly of the calamity which had befallen his master, of the resolution which he had formed to deliver him, of the means he had used to save part of his property to provide a fund for carrying out his design, and, finally, besought him to take charge of the precious articles which he bore.

The Consul, astonished at the spirit and fidelity of the young man, engaged to afford him every assistance in his power, and promised to keep with the greatest safety the valuables entrusted to him. Then the kind-hearted old Frenchman inquired if he had any reason to suspect why his master had been arrested.

"None whatever," was the reply. "His conduct in the New World was always irreproachable, and since we disembarked in this city I can safely assert that he has never been guilty of a single act or look or word that betrayed even indiscretion. No; his riches have tempted some wretch to ruin him. In my opinion, if I am to speak my entire mind, Don Estevan made choice of a dangerous residence. The master of the house, Don Pedro Castro, has always appeared to me to be too inquisitive. He has continually harassed me with questions lately concerning myself and the life of my master. I do not like that man nor his son either. I have been told that they have been estranged for some long time, but have been reconciled to each other within a few days, during which time they have had many interviews and conferences together. I have observed them exchange very suspicious looks as they viewed the various trunks and presents which Don Estevan brought with him to the house. The day before yesterday they spent the evening together, and yesterday they were never separated. Perhaps I am deceived, but I cannot help suspecting that these men are concerned in the cause of our calamity."

"If that be the case," replied the Consul, "I will baffle at least a part of their nefarious plot. I will disappoint their avarice and that of the Inquisition, too. I know that Estevan has caused the most of his belongings to be insured at Bordeaux. I, as French Consul, will immediately require that this be sequestered to secure the charges of my countrymen, so that, if you succeed in your enterprise, Estevan, at least, will not be ruined."

With his pockets well lined with Portuguese notes, which the Consul had exchanged for some of those in the pocket-book, Zamora bade adieu to the Consul, feeling that good fortune was already on their side, and, with a lighter heart than he had had since his master's arrest, went forth determined and with a hopeful feeling that by the help of Providence he would succeed in his dangerous enterprise, and once more embrace the man who had been so good to him, who had been a father to him, and rescued him from obscurity to become—who knows?—perhaps his saviour.

But let us return to the house of the Castros. On the day succeeding the arrest the Commissioners of the Inquisition were there and had taken an inventory of all the goods belonging to Estevan, placing seals upon them. They were about to leave, having also sealed the doors of the rooms lately occupied by the merchant, when they were met by the French Consul, who drove up at the moment in his carriage. This gentleman, by virtue of the treatry of commerce existing beween the two nations, exhibited to them a copy of the insurance of the company in Bordeaux, and required that, in order to secure the interests of his countrymen, all the effects of Estevan should be sequestered until the termination of the trial. At the same time, producing a list of each chest of valuables, all of which were numbered, he desired that the goods should be checked, and suggested that in everybody's interest this should be done at once. The Commissioners assented, and the goods were examined. Castro, who was present, terrified for the consequences of this proceeding, and knowing the Inquisition to be inexorably severe in punishing any kind of peculation, declared that he had intended himself to have made the same demand, informing them of the suspicious fact that several of the prisoner's parcels were in his custody and that he desired to be relieved of the responsibility. Everything was, therefore, found to be intact, with one exception—the case which Zamora had taken away.

The Consul, looking fixedly at Pedro Castro, told him that, as he had taken the custody of Don Estevan's property with such care, he would be held responsible for the missing case, which was of more value than any of the others. The time would come when he would have to answer for it.

Mad with rage at having been caught in the very net which he had cast himself, Castro was perplexed as to the disappearance of that which he had determined to possess, and immediately came to the conclusion that Carlos had stolen it, vowing vengeance against his son if such proved to be the case.

In the meanwhile Zamora had not been idle. He had made the first step towards the working out of his scheme, which was to be productive of so many dramatic incidents, an enterprise surrounded by so much danger, which was to devolve itself into a question of life and death both for Don Estevan and himself.

TO BE CONTINUED.

Her "Armour Plate."

In the year 1732, a woman, named Jane Beare, was found guilty of inciting a woman to poison her husband, and also of child-murder. She was ordered, as part of her punishment, to stand in the pillory on two market days at Derby. On the first day the people so pelted her with eggs, turnips, cabbages, etc., that she disengaged herself by some means and jumped among the crowd, when she was at once carried back to prison. On the second day of her appearance, as soon as she mounted she knelt down and begged mercy of the outrageous mob. The officers, finding it difficult to get her head through the hole in the pillory, pulled off her headdress, and found a large pewter plate, beaten out to fit her head, and which was immediately taken off and thrown amongst the people. As soon as she was fixed, such showers of eggs, turnips, potatoes, etc., were thrown that it was expected that she would not be taken down alive. She lost a great quantity of blood, which, running down the pillory, somewhat appeased their fury. Those who saw her afterwards in the gaol said that she was such an object as was not fit to be looked upon.

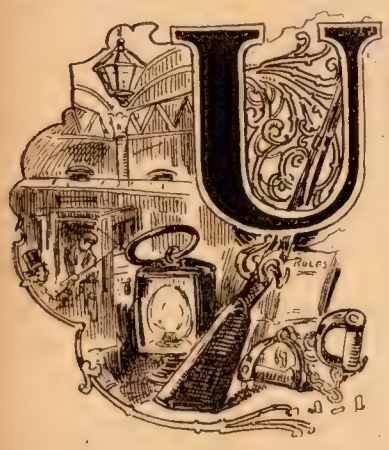
Lead in His Head.

A very prosy judge was laying down the law at great length to a jury at the Lancaster Assizes in the year 1879, and commenting on the evidence of a witness who had sworn to having seen the prisoner steal some copper. The judge, who was constantly calling the metal "lead" instead of copper, had been on each occasion corrected by the counsel for the prosecution, and at last, when the latter once more said, "Copper, my lord," he apologised to the jury, saying, "I beg your pardon, gentlemen—copper; but I cannot get the lead out of my head." The whole court roared with laughter at this sally, and kept it up for some time, a matter which rather surprised the judge, who was apparently quite unconscious of having said anything to cause such an outburst of merriment.

Done to Death at Dover.

An account of how Thomas Wells murdered Mr. Walshe, the Stationmaster at Dover, in 1868, and how he suffered for the crime; his being the first private execution in England.

"Gusts of such passion are like storms of wind, which carry devastation far and wide, and sweep everything before them."
—ZOLA, "La Debâcle."



UP to the year 1868 executions took place *coram publico*, and were regarded, it is not too much to say, as spectacles or entertainments provided free, gratis and for nothing by the generous authorities, and at which anyone was at liberty to be present. The custom was a brutalising one, and was assuredly more honoured in the breach than in the observance. There can be nothing edifying in seeing a man die a sudden and degraded death, and the horrible scenes often witnessed at public executions—such, for instance, as took place when Holloway and Haggerty were hanged—were sufficient to justify a change much earlier than the desirable alteration actually took place. The first private execution was that of Thomas Wells, on August 13th, 1868, and I purpose giving a brief account of that function and of the crime for which he suffered.

In the year mentioned Mr. Edward Adolphus Walshe was the superintendent of the Priory Station, at the Dover terminus of the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway, and amongst the inferior employees of the company was a young fellow of eighteen, named Thomas Wells, a carriage-cleaner, who was charged with having wilfully murdered Mr. Walshe, on May 1st. It would appear that there had been a misunderstanding between the superintendent and Wells, arising out of some irregularities in the conduct of the latter. Mr. Walshe had had occasion to complain of his behaviour and had threatened to report him, a circumstance which seems to have rankled in a mind at that time unduly moody and unsettled. On the 1st of May—a Friday—Mr. Walshe was seated in his office, in company with Mr. Cox, the superintendent of the harbour station of the same line, engaged, as Wells supposed, in the preparation of the unfavourable report concerning him, when the latter appeared at the door and immediately pointed a gun at the head of his superior. Before Mr. Walshe could speak or move he had fired, and the ball, entering the front, passed out at the back of the head, completely shattering the skull. This dreadful deed created the greatest excitement in Dover and its neighbourhood, for the murdered man was well known and much esteemed, and the calm deliberation of the act placed it above the category of commonplace crime. The assassin was shortly afterwards seized and taken into custody by Sergeant Stevens, who had been hastily summoned to the scene of the crime, and this officer disarmed and handcuffed his prisoner.

Wells was brought before the magistrates on Saturday, May 2nd. There was a very large attendance of justices of the peace, and the jury-box and every available seat in court was occupied by persons of influence living in the town or near it, who displayed the most intense interest in the proceedings. Outside the court a large concourse of townspeople, anxious to obtain a glimpse of the youthful prisoner, had gathered together, and a rush was made for the cab which carried Wells to the court, he being in charge of Sergeant Stevens. On being placed before the magistrates the handcuffs which Wells was wearing were removed, and he then calmly sat down and surveyed the court with great deliberation. He was very youthful-looking, being not yet nineteen, but his face bore a very morose expression. He was dressed in the garb of a railway porter, and did not appear at all concerned by the serious position in which he found himself. During the examination he looked round the court, which he scanned very closely, as if looking for persons he might recognise. It was quite evident that this indifferent demeanour was not assumed, for he had displayed it since the moment of his arrest, when his first request had been for something to eat. It was stated that he had made no sort of allusion to his act since his detention, and it is interesting to note that a copy of "The Illustrated Police News" was found upon his person when taken into custody. This is a fact, though we do not quote it as a proof that constant reading of such literature as our contemporary then supplied—in rather a startling form, it must be admitted—had driven this wrong-headed young man to the adoption of crime as the means of achieving notoriety.

Mr. Henry Cox, superintendent of the L. C. and D. stations at Dover, dramatically told the court the story of the tragedy. He said: "In consequence of a report made to me by the deceased, I was in his office on the morning of the murder, about eleven o'clock, and Wells, about whom some complaint had been lodged, was called into the room. I remonstrated with him. . . I found him disposed to excuse and argue about his unbecoming behaviour, and not at all inclined to receive my reproof in a proper spirit. Mr. Walshe had told me that the prisoner had fired off a pistol when on duty. Wells made some comment and attempted to justify his action, but I forget the exact words he used. I sent Wells away to think over his conduct, and he returned in ten minutes, and in a very obdurate and aggressive humour. Three minutes after I was alarmed by the report of firearms, and at the same moment Mr. Walshe, who was standing by my chair, fell lifeless. As soon as I recovered myself I rushed to the door and called assistance."

It was proved that Wells had been heard to threaten the deceased, remarking to John Golder, another porter, that if he was discharged as a consequence of Mr. Walshe's report, "the old —— should know about it!" This witness saw Wells rushing away from the door of the superintendent's office immediately after the discharge of the gun, which was an old, single-barrelled, smooth-bore weapon. Some caps found in the pocket of the prisoner exactly fitted the gun. Other witnesses were able to prove that Wells had habitually threatened injury to the deceased, and was always very excited when speaking to or of the superintendent, who had, not unnaturally, objected to his firing off pistols indiscriminately when trains were passing.

The trial of Wells took place at the Kent Summer Assizes, on July 20, 1868, Mr. Sergeant Sleigh and Mr. Streight appearing for the Crown and Mr. Ribton and Mr. Biron defending the prisoner, who had abandoned the audacious demeanour manifested before the magistrates, and now seemed to fully realise his position.

Mr. Henry Cox was the first witness, and repeated his story of the murder, from which it would appear that he did not actually see the shot fired. Wells was standing, he said, about two yards outside the office when Mr. Walshe fell. The witness was cross-examined in order to show that Wells was struck a year previously by the buffer of an engine and carried home insensible, the inference being that his brain was affected; but Mr. Cox did not, unfortunately for the purposes of the defence, seem to remember the circumstance. John Golder, platform porter at the Priory Station, deposed that about eleven o'clock on the morning of the 1st of May, he heard the report of fire-arms and saw the prisoner running down the platform from the direction of the station-master's office with a gun in his hand. Wells hid himself in an empty railway carriage, and was observed by the witness, who gave the information and caused him to be apprehended. He added that he had heard that the prisoner had met with a slight accident on the line some time in the previous summer, but he was not aware that his head was injured in any way. George Thomas Stevens, sergeant in the Dover borough police force, deposed that he was sent for to the station. He opened the door of one of the after-carriages standing in the siding, and saw the prisoner leaning on his right arm on a cushion and the gun produced in his left hand. The witness said, "You must deliver up the gun to me," and prisoner, who made no remark, quietly handed it over. He then said, "You must get out of the carriage," and he took hold of Wells's arm and pulled him out, he and Superintendent Coram taking him to the police-station. On the way there he examined the gun to see

whether it was cocked, and the accused remarked, "All right; it's not loaded."

John Cranford, an engine-driver, was in the carriage-shed at the Priory Station on Wednesday morning, April 29th, and the prisoner was there, using very profane language. Witness heard him make some reference to somebody's "life," but the wind was very high at the time, and he could not catch the exact words. William Sanders, a plate-layer, deposed to assisting to raise Mr. Walshe, who, however, was quite dead. In cross-examination he stated that he had heard that prisoner had met with an accident by being struck on the head, that he was picked up unconscious, and laid up for ten days or a fortnight. He had observed nothing since then that could be called strange in his manner.

Ashby Osborn, a surgeon, was called, and stated that he examined the body of deceased at the station-master's office. He was lying on his back, the feet towards the door, and the head just resting on the fender He died almost immediately after witness arrived, and had only uttered some inarticulate sounds. There was a large wound in the face, destroying the nose, fracturing the upper jaw, and there was a wound at the back of the head, so that witness assumed that the missile had passed clean through the skull. Deceased was a strong, healthy man of about sixty. It may be mentioned here that the bullet was subsequently found embedded in the wall above the mantelpiece.

The case for the prosecution being concluded, Mr. Ribton addressed the jury for the defence, and he argued that the prisoner's act showed an absence of premeditation, and that it had been committed in a burst of angry passion. Wells had been provoked by the unfavourable reports that had been made concerning him, and was not master of his own understanding at the time he did the deed. But supposing, which was quite possible, the gun had gone off accidentally? That would entitle the prisoner to an acquittal, and he reminded the jury that Mr. Cox had not, as first stated, actually seen the weapon pointed at the deceased by the prisoner. He would call several witnesses to speak as to the state of the mind of the accused, who had been remarkably flighty and strange in his general demeanour since his serious accident. His object was not to prove that the prisoner was absolutely mad, but that his brain was to some extent disordered. Thomas Wells, a fish-salesman and father of the lad in the dock, was then called, and spoke as to the eccentric behaviour of his son since the accident he had incurred in the service of the railway company. They had to fasten all the doors and windows at night for fear he should get out. He came down one night and "almost pitched his mother out of bed." He was subject to bursts of passion. Witness had lent the prisoner the gun found in his possession and showed him how to use it, as the birds used to disturb his seeds, and he wanted them scared away. Other witnesses, including the prisoner's mother, testified to his strange conduct after the accident on the railway, and Mrs. Wells stated that he had been unruly, passionate, and excitable ever since his recovery, and that she had always thought the mishap had slightly injured his brain.

Mr. Ribton founded the defence, in fact, on the hypothesis that Wells was insane, but Sergeant Sleigh opposed this assumption in a reply of much power, and the learned judge summed up dead against the prisoner. The jury, having been absent in deliberation for a few minutes only, returned into court with a verdict of guilty, and Wells was asked, in the usual way, if he had anything to say why sentence of death should not be passed upon him The prisoner shook his head and shrugged his shoulders in a flippant and indifferent manner, but the judge was visibly affected during the passing of the dread sentence, and described the murder as a terrible one, almost incredible in a man of the prisoner's years. He could hold out no prospect of mercy in this world. The grief of the parents of the condemned man at this point was pitiful, his mother's sobs being heard throughout the court, and the spectacle moved even the murderer to tears, though he quickly recovered his composure, and his face wore a positive smile as he followed the warder to the cells below.

That the crime was committed by this youth when under the control of a fit of ungovernable rage there can be little doubt, and I cannot but think that justice would have been satisfied had he been respited and sent into penal servitude

THE BALL ENTERED THE FRONT OF HIS HEAD.

for life. It was of course, a brutal offence, and had presumably been meditated for some little time, but rightly or wrongly Wells felt himself injured by the reports of the deceased man, and his badly-balanced brain hankered after revenge. He was executed at Maidstone Gaol, and from the circumstance that his was the first private execution in this country, some interest and importance was attached to the occasion. During the interval between the trial and the carrying out of the sentence Wells was visited by his father and mother, who brought with them his sweetheart, a Dover girl, to whom he had written many letters since his condemnation. The interview was a very painful and affecting one, for all Wells's fortitude deserted him at this trying time, and he gave way to unrestrained emotion. He said that his time was indeed drawing short, but that he had given himself up entirely to preparation for another world, and trusted that his sins might be pardoned since his repentance was sincere.

On the Thursday before the fatal day the warrant for the execution was received by Major Bannister, the governor of Maidstone Gaol, and it was immediately read to the prisoner,

Running Down the Platform.

who heard it with great composure. The next morning the Holy Communion was administered by the Rev. W. C. F. Foster, who had shown the deepest interest in and solicitude for the condemned man.

On the morning of the execution there were few, if any, strangers in the vicinity of the prison, and the town presented quite its usual appearance. A few of the tradesmen and other inhabitants might have been seen conversing together upon the spectacle that was going on within the walls of the prison, but the town generally presented a marked and extraordinary contrast to that which it had exhibited when executions had been public.

It was the circumstances surrounding the execution, rather than the man hanged or his crime, which gave the proceedings of August 13, 1868, a special claim to notice. For the first time in England the law took its course without the shameful accessories of a howling, screaming, struggling and blaspheming mob. Wells died with but some two dozen people to witness his supreme agony, all of whom were hushed and solemn, and in his dying moments had nothing to disturb the fervent exhortations of the spiritual instructor who held his hand and breathed consolation to the last.

At a quarter to ten a cab drove up to the New Inn, close by, and an aged, white-haired, white-bearded man alighted, to be received by the publican in waiting near the tavern door, which opened and immediately closed on the visitor. He was dressed, this sinister stranger, in respectable black, and wore a tall hat and black gloves—the trappings and the suits of woe, as Hamlet says—and looked like a sedate and retired grocer arrayed for a funeral. Yet his face might have supplied some clue to his calling, for it was far from a pleasing one. This was the redoubtable Calcraft himself, and his arrival supplied the one feeble spasm of excitement the little crowd enjoyed. When he emerged from another door to that which he had entered and walked towards the great gates of the gaol he was recognised, and a small following of boys and idle young men conducted him to his destination. "He's going to hang Wells," said these, and Calcraft gave a smile, which may have meant professional pride or may have meant amused contempt for the interest he inspired in the minds of these groundlings. His confrère, Smith of Dudley, awaited him inside the precincts of the gaol, and the two dread ministers of the law were admitted to Wells's cell, near the prison yard.

Both gazed earnestly at the individual it had become their duty to exterminate, but the prisoner showed no signs of trepidation and looked curiously upon them.

The following brief conversation is reported to have ensued:

Calcraft: "You know my mission, I suppose? I hope you will believe that I bear you no kind of malice or ill-will?"

Wells: "I ain't afraid to die. I'm at peace with all men, and only want to make my peace above."

Calcraft: "You show a right spirit."

Wells: "I see my sinful ways. The Lord have mercy upon me and all like me."

The two hangmen then shook hands with the prisoner and began the usual preparations for the dread ordeal. To these Wells submitted quietly enough, and during the process he murmured some half-articulate prayers to the Almighty, which appeared to be perfectly sincere. The chaplain then appeared, and of him the felon took very little notice, continuing to pray with some vehemence as the executioner completed the process of pinioning.

Wells held a book of hymns, which had been sent him by a relative until his arms were strapped, when he suddenly requested the governor of the gaol, who was present, to accept it as a parting gift "from a poor unfortunate."

He had turned rather pale and careworn during the last few minutes, but his fortitude did not desert him at this critical juncture, and he remarked to Calcraft, who seemed to entertain some regard for his mild-looking "subject," "Remember, I freely forgive you for what you are about to do." Occasionally he interrupted the even tenor of his appeals for forgiveness above by referring to his crime, which he attributed to his bursts of violent temper and vindictive feelings towards the murdered man. "Perhaps he weren't such a bad sort," he said, referring to his unfortunate victim. "I ought not to have borne him any grudge." These facts, I may mention, were supplied by the officials to one of the reporters of a Maidstone paper, who some time since related them to me, and their truth I can vouch for.

Rain began to fall when the procession started to a shed which had been erected in the yard. The prisoner appeared still in the uniform of the railway, a short, stoutly-built young fellow, with a cadaverous countenance, a nasal voice, and a buttonhole of red geranium, his sweetheart's last gift, in his waistcoat. He was singing a hymn in nasal tones as he walked, and he never once opened his eyes, two warders conducting him to the scaffold. Arrived there, he took his stand with firmness, and even after the white cap had been drawn over his face continued to sing his melancholy dirge. There was no dull thud when the drop fell, but a sharp and half-metallic clash, and the body of the dying man, after swinging half-way round, resumed its original position. Thomas Wells was as dead as Cæsar!

He Was Generally Right.

LORD THURLOW once spoke of Lord Mansfield in the highest terms, saying, amongst other things, "He was a surprising man. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred he was right in his opinions or decisions; and when once in a hundred times he was wrong, ninety-nine men out of a hundred could not discover it. He was a wonderful man."

ASSASSINATION OF GEORGE CARTER

AT ERITH.

Verdict of MURDER against a DEAD MAN.

"Behold the villain's dire disgrace!
Not death itself can end;
He finds no peaceful burying place,
His breathless corse no friend."
—HOGARTH, "The Reward of Cruelty."

THE year 1856 will be for ever memorable as that in which the Crimean War came to an end, the most blundering, cruel, and disgraceful campaign in which the British soldier has ever been called upon to take part. That it is well-nigh half a century ago seems hard to believe, and once again reminds one that time passes swiftly on the wing and the older one gets the more rapidly it flies.

As I look back it seems but a few years ago that I witnessed the great firework display on Primrose Hill upon the occasion of the Peace Rejoicings from the window of a house next door to where old Johnny Toole, our retired veteran comedian, then resided, in the Prince of Wales's Road. As I turn over my rough diary of that year, too, the incidents connected with my duties as a reporter for the press stand out almost as clearly to the mind as if they had but occurred the other day. There were murders galore to record, whilst the tremendous embezzlements by servants of the great railway companies created almost a panic, and the garotting mania was at its zenith. Burglaries were of daily occurrence, and in the Bankruptcy Court the unwhitewashed were standing many deep. Altogether at this particular period England was not a happy land, for the war had played havoc with trade, the political situation was in a very critical state, and the labour market was as bad as it could be, whilst crime was rampant.

Little wonder, then, that those of the rising generation who wished to make money and a mark in life were anxious to get away from the old country and seek their fortunes in "woods and pastures new." So in the year 1856 emigration was going on to a large extent, and Australia was then looked upon as the El Dorado, where piles of gold could be had for the fetching. True, the mining fever, which became renewed in its intensity four years before the perpetration of the crime I am about to relate, had everything to do with the anxiety on the part of young fellows who could raise the ready to visit the antipodes, but I cannot help thinking that the undesirable state of affairs in this country at the time had much influence over the exodus.

One fine, bright, strapping young fellow of twenty-two years of age, the son of an independent gentleman, residing at Battersea, had caught the "yellow fever." His name was George Carter, and his father, always finding him a "handful"—a devil-may-care youth, who would stick at no business for many months together—thought that a trip to Australia might have the effect of steadying him down. So he arranged that Master George (an only son, I may mention) should have the wherewithal for his outfit and passage and make preparations at once for the voyage.

Amongst Carter's somewhat fast acquaintances there was a man about thirty years of age, named Thomas Cartwright Worrell. He was by all accounts a typical Bohemian, could play a good game at billiards, was invariably fortunate at cards, sang a good song, and was looked upon by all who knew him as a jolly good fellow and extra good company. George Carter and he were inseparable, and it was from Tom Worrell that the young aspirant to golden honours had first conceived the idea of going to Australia.

Young as he was, Worrell had sought his fortune at the antipodes on two occasions. On the first he had remained there only long enough to make a small amount at the diggings, and there were rumours that he had to leave in rather a hurry or he might have been lynched. This statement came from a man who had met Worrell up country and who had nothing to say in his favour.

However, this did not prevent Worrell from going out again, this time to New South Wales, where soon after 1852 (the year that the precious metal was discovered there) the output was valued at £2,660,946, and is to-day the richest gold territory next to Victoria. Staying there only a couple of years, he came back to England with enough money, apparently, to rank him as a man in comfortable circumstances. Anyhow, he did nothing for a living, had been married something like a year before he made young George Carter's acquaintance, and always seemed to have a sovereign in his pocket, which he spent freely amongst his companions.

There can be no doubt that Thomas Cartwright Worrell, by his stories of adventure in the bush, by the graphic and rosy-coloured pictures he painted of the diggings, and by the boasting of his own success as a digger, caused George Carter to determine upon trying his fortunes in the new colony. So ripened became the two men's friendship that they were constantly in each other's society, and Worrell would scarcely let a day pass without looking up his particular pal George. He advised him as to his outfit, and appeared to take the greatest interest in all the preparations for his journey.

Everything having been decided upon, Mr. Carter, senior (who, by the bye, had left a will in favour of his son George), gave the gold-digger-in-embryo a letter to Mr. Freeman, his solicitor, of Bucklersbury, authorising him to pay over the sum of one hundred pounds, which he deemed sufficient for the lad to make his journey up country with when he had arrived at Sydney.

George was in the seventh heaven of delight. The anticipation of a glorious voyage half round the world, every article that he required for his outfit, the most valuable advice that could be obtained from his dear friend Worrell, and a hundred golden sovereigns to land with! What more could he desire? He was to sail towards the end of November, and all preparations were complete.

On the 7th of that month George Carter, who had been keeping it up a little over night, was not a very early riser. Ten o'clock found him still in bed, when he was aroused by the servant knocking at his door to inform him that Mr. Thomas Worrell had called to see him. "Send him up," was the reply.

"Good morning, George! Why, you lazy beggar, not up yet! This will never do. Suppose you're making the most of the home luxuries, for you'll sleep in your breeches and boots out there, with a six-shooter by your side as a bedfellow. But turn out, old chap. I want you to spend the morning with me for a little chat and a few more words of advice. The time is getting short. I've brought you a little present just to keep me in mind. This will have to be your inseparable companion, you know, so I shall be always with you in spirit, if not in substance."

Thus having delivered himself, Mr. Thomas Worrell undid a parcel and produced a strongly-made body-belt, with various pouches and compartments, capable of stowing away a good number of golden coins of the realm or a sufficient quantity of nuggets to keep the ball rolling for a considerable time.

George Carter was out of bed with a spring, and, shaking his friend heartily by the hand, declared that he would prize the gift as long as he lived, and that it should not come off his waist as long as the memory of their friendship lasted or till it was cut from his dead body.

"Don't talk like that, George. Bring it back full of gold-dust and nuggets just as a little make-weight to the fortune I trust you will obtain. Here's luck, old chap! A safe journey to you and a long life and plenty of yellow-boys!"

And Thomas Worrell helped himself to a stiff glass of brandy; pop went the cork of the soda-water bottle, and he drained the glass to his friend's good fortune.

Like a new toy, young George must needs buckle on the belt, and, just to get accustomed to the weight and encumbrance, of course he must put the gold he was to take with

him in the pouches. So taking from a drawer the sovereigns, he soon had them placed, and was dressed, declaring that he felt not the slightest inconvenience, but could comfortably put up with the weight of as many again.

Thomas Worrell laughed. It was a hollow, unnatural laugh, and if anybody could have seen the expression upon his face that had stolen over it during the past five minutes they would not have recognised the smiling, devil-may-care, twinkling eyes of the jolly Bohemian and boon companion of George Carter. The very devil was in his look, whilst there was a smile that passed over his countenance which would have made the careful observer shudder.

Take care, George Carter! Beware of your dear friend!

* * * * * *

Fifty years ago Erith, in Kent, which has been always famous as a yachting station, was a good deal quieter in its surroundings than even to-day, although now it cannot be termed a very lively place. Still, since then many villas have

"You lazy beggar!"

sprung up near the station, and the delightful walks into the country, away from the river, are amongst the prettiest in Kent, and no doubt ere long Erith will become a fashionable and well populated district. In 1856, however, it was exceedingly quiet, and amongst the places that lent an air of solitude to the spot was a large estate known as Lesney Park. At one time Lesney Hall had been a magnificent mansion, surrounded by beautiful grounds, but by some means it had fallen into Chancery, and for thirty years it had been unoccupied and permitted to crumble into decay. As usual with these old deserted mansions, the inhabitants of the district had declared it to be haunted, and many were the strange and weird stories told of spectres and unearthly noises seen and heard at the "witching hour of night."

One effect these fables had was to induce the villagers to give the supposed haunted house a wide berth, the consequence being that few, unless engaged at the farm or the estate, made their way up the avenue leading to the house and formerly known as Park Spring Copse. So many years of neglect had allowed this once handsome approach to alter to what looked like a green lane with rank grass and brambles growing in profusion beneath the fine elms.

The early part of November, 1856, was exceptionally fine for the time of year, and the sun glinted through the leafless boughs of the avenue of trees in Park Spring Copse, throwing its mellow light upon the russet, autumnal leaves which had fallen ankle-deep upon the ground.

It was on the 8th of the month, about noon, that one of the farm labourers was making his way down this rarely-frequented copse, or "croft," when he was startled to see the figure of a man lying amongst the leaves. His face was ghastly white and turned upwards, the eyes partly opened, disclosing that peculiar stare glazed by the hand of death. In the right hand was clutched a bright instrument, turned upwards, the arm bent and stiff. As the man approached the awful spectacle he could see dark stains upon the garments of the dead man and that the body lay amongst the leaves, which were wet and saturated with blood.

Running at the top of his speed, the frightened labourer made his way out of the copse in the direction of the railway station, where he was fortunate enough to fall in with the village constable, who enlisted assistance, and, getting the stretcher, made his way with all speed to the scene of the tragedy.

"Case of suicide, that's clear," said the officer. "Be careful how we place it. Don't touch the hand with the tool in it. Why, it's a carpenter's gouge what he's done it with!"

Near to where the body lay were a cap and a coat evidently belonging to the dead man, for the body was divested of both, and the top buttons of the trousers were torn open, whilst the tremendous effusion of blood which saturated the whole of the shirt proved that the wound or wounds had been severely and deeply inflicted.

The body was at once removed to the dead-house, and Mr. Carttar, coroner for Kent, was communicated with, and an effort made by the police to establish the identity of the dead man. By some unaccountable means, but quite a superficial examination of the body was made by the medical men, and, although it was palpable to everybody—even the policeman—that the body had no less than sixteen stabs, nobody seemed to think for a moment that a foul deed had been committed, but calmly put it down to suicide.

The inquest upon the unknown was fixed for Tuesday, the 11th of November, and upon that day the jury assembled at the Crown Hotel, Erith. In the meanwhile the police had failed to discover the identity of the dead man, there was nothing particular to remark about the evidence of the medical man, and the jury were about to return a verdict of "Suicide." Mr. Carttar, the coroner, however, was not quite satisfied. He informed them that so slight was the evidence offered them that he considered it his duty to adjourn the inquest for a week. In the meanwhile he directed the medical man to make a post-mortem examination of the body, and urged the police to make more strenuous efforts to discover the relations or friends of the deceased.

It was fortunate, indeed, that the coroner acted with such discretion, or this crime, which turned out to be one of the most cold-blooded murders of the century, would never have been discovered, the man would have been buried in a pauper's grave as an "unknown," and I should not have had the opportunity of visiting Erith to watch the investigations of the tragedy which, as I shall presently relate, terminated with a dramatic and extraordinary scene, unique in the annals of crime and perplexing to a degree.

But I must now ask my readers to return with me to Battersea upon the morning of the 7th of November, where we will follow the movements of the two friends, George Carter and Thomas Worrell, and, if no eyes witnessed all that transpired, and if no ear took in the words spoken by these men to each other, I am safe in describing what really happened and what occurred between them, for the circumstances afterwards revealed to me in all their minutest details entitle me to construct the story but in one way.

Light-hearted and gaily laughing, young Carter and his bosom "pal" went out from the house at Battersea, George feeling the self-importance of being girdled with gold.

"What say you, old chap, to a quiet day a little way out in the country? The weather is splendid. Let us take a train a little way out and have a good walk, a steak, and then back to town early. It may be the last time we may have a chance of spending a day together."

"Just what I should enjoy. But they will expect me back to dinner, and think I have only come out for half an hour. Besides, I've only my cap on and woollen shirt—not even a collar. Then, again, I don't see the fun of lugging

this coin about with me if we are going for a long walk," said Carter.

"Ah, my boy, you must get used to that, and as for your get-up, you need not change; we shall be calling nowhere particular. I thought of taking a run down to Erith. I had an old chum living there in the little village, and I should like to ascertain if he still hangs out there; afterwards we can take a stroll through some lovely spots of Kent right close to the station."

Carter at once agreed, and the two friends had a drink at a tavern in Battersea, which they daily frequented, and made their way to London Bridge Railway Station, and booked by the noon train on the North Kent line for Erith. On leaving the station they proceeded together in the direction of the old and deserted demesne already referred to, and known as Lesney Hall.

not a habitation or being to be seen. Even their footsteps were silent as they strode slowly over the deep bed of dry leaves which had accumulated with the autumns of many years. It was a weird, uncanny spot, and well might the villagers regard the place with a certain awe.

Thomas Worrell was strange in his manner. If one could have scrutinised his face closely it would have been seen that it was very pale and that the nostrils quivered. Besides there was that devilish expression which he had exhibited in the morning once again upon his countenance. He lagged behind his companion a few paces and, apparently, was lighting his pipe. It could be seen, though, that this was not his purpose, for his gaze was fixed upon the ground, evidently intent upon the discovery of some object that he expected to find in the immediate vicinity.

Starting forward, he stoops and picks up a great stone,

BRINGS IT DOWN WITH A CRASH.

And now I must call attention to a very extraordinary circumstance; little it seemed at the time, but destined to forge the one missing link which was to clearly identify the victim of this diabolical tragedy and set aside all doubt as to who was the murderer.

Formerly residing at Battersea was a respectable couple by the name of Perkins, but some year or so before they had removed to Erith. It so chanced that upon the very day that Carter and Worrell came out of the station on their arrival Mrs. Perkins passed. Intimately acquainted with the Carters at Battersea, she immediately recognised George, and would have spoken to him had he not been with a stranger. She saw them take the road to Lesney Hall. And thither we will follow them.

The two men had proceeded some three hundred yards up the copse, and the conversation had lagged. Was it the influence of the surroundings? Not a sound was to be heard,

then, as quick as lightning, he advances a few steps, raises it high above his head and brings it down with a crash upon the skull of his companion, which is guarded only by a thin cloth cap. With a groan, poor George Carter falls all of a heap amongst the leaves. Then, with a terrible look of ferocity, and snorting with each stroke, Worrell deals stab after stab with a sharp instrument into the breast of his victim. He seems to possess such a thirst for blood that the very sight of it ebbing from the mortal wounds he has inflicted makes him long for more.

It is the attack of a fiend, not a human being.

Sixteen times does he plunge this long, sharp instrument into the breast of the man he has but a few short hours ago claimed as friend. Surely this is the work of a madman! His brain is turned. He must be a lunatic. Yet this can scarcely be, for there is method in his madness. See, as the death-clutch closes the hands of the prostrate man, Thomas

Worrell tears the fingers apart and places the handle of the bloody gouge in the hand, which, with a last spasmodic twitch, holds the instrument firmly in its grasp. Then, quickly but deliberately, the trousers are torn open at the front and the belt unbuckled. The coat is then taken from the body and the pockets rifled. Not a letter, not a card, not a single article which can lead to identification does the murderer leave behind.

Casting the jacket away over the brambles he looks with staring, blood-shot eyes at his victim, and, with a low, fiendish chuckle, strides quickly over the bed of leaves and makes his way out of the copse at a point he evidently knows, where not a soul is to be met. The deed is done. Thomas Worrell has risked all here and hereafter for the gain of so little gold. Such a deed is one of those inscrutable mysteries which the human mind seeks in vain to fathom.

The inquest, as I have stated, had been adjourned until the 18th of March. Before that date, however, a great light had been thrown upon the tragedy, and it had assumed such importance that the Press-men of London made quite an invasion of the little town of Erith, for the result of the further examination by the surgeons had placed suicide out of the question, and it was certain that a foul murder had been committed.

Dr. Oates, an eminent surgeon of the district, found that there were sixteen punctured wounds in the chest and ribs on the left side. Of these injuries, no less than five had penetrated the heart, one being in the apex, which is a fleshy part without important arteries, a second in the right auricle, and the other three in the left ventricle, whilst through other wounds parts of the lung were protruding. In addition to these injuries, there was an extensive fracture of the skull at the back part of the head, and a portion of the bone, about the size of an egg, was beaten into the brain.

Having decided, after all this unwarrantable delay, that it was a case of murder, the next question was, "Who could the victim be, and who his assailant?" Nothing whatever upon the deceased was there to lead to his identity, for the only articles found upon him were three half-pence. But two days before the resumed inquiry at the inquest Mrs. Perkins determined to go to the mortuary and view the body. Every time the murder was referred to the face of George Carter seemed to appear before her.

Having viewed the body, she had no doubt about who the murdered man was, for she had seen him in Erith but a few days before, and had known him intimately for years. Immediately the friends were communicated with, and the father with all speed came down and found his murdered son, his favourite child, who but a day or two previously was full of life and spirits, of hope and confidence, and prepared to fight the battle of life at the far end of the world.

It was a sad scene I witnessed at the inquest when the father was examined. But stranger still was the appearance of one man. I shall never forget that man's face as long as I live. He had come down from London especially to attend the examination into the death of George Carter, and his name was Thomas Worrell. If ever there was the word "Guilty" branded across a man's forehead it was there. Accustomed to meet criminals in close contact for years, I had many opportunities of studying their physiognomies, and could generally form an opinion not far off the mark; but never did I feel more confident that the man who sat in the coroner's court at the Crown Hotel, Erith, was the murderer of George Carter.

Of course it was known that the two men had left together from the house in Battersea on the day of the murder, but Worrell had declared that he had left his friend at Chelsea. He furthermore showed the greatest concern respecting "George." Every morning he would call at the murdered man's residence and anxiously inquire for his dear pal George. But when the body was identified and it was rumoured that he had been murdered Worrell's grief appeared to be intense, and he immediately journeyed to Erith to view the body of his dear lamented friend.

Little did he know, however, that George Carter had been seen in company with him on the morning of the murder at Erith, or he would not have been sitting in the coroner's court upon that particular occasion. Inspector Mallalieu, who had the case in charge, knew it, however, and I noticed what a sharp eye he kept upon Mr. Worrell during the examination, having made up his mind long before who was the perpetrator of the deed. The inspector told me afterwards that he thought of arresting Worrell much earlier, but that he considered it better to "let the web work a little closer."

If further proof were needed of this man's guilt by his demeanour it soon came, and there was a perfect buzz of excitement when it occurred. At one period of the examination the blood-stained, woollen shirt, with the punctures through it, was held up by the police, and the surgeon explained the direction of the wounds. This was too much for Thomas Worrell. Turning ashen pale, he rose to his feet and staggered rather than walked out of the room. Mallalieu had his eyes on him and followed him. Within half an hour the man was in custody, charged with the murder of George Carter.

Of course, he protested his innocence, but the circumstantial evidence fixed the guilt firmly upon him, and he was formally remanded at the police court. Then the police discovered not only that Worrell and Carter had journeyed to Erith together, but that within half an hour of the time the murder was supposed to have been committed Mrs. Perkins had seen them go in the direction of Lesney Hall, where the body was found. But perhaps the most overwhelming piece of testimony against the wretched man was the fact that the gouge which had been used to commit the deed was the very tool that had been borrowed by Worrell's father from a neighbour only a few days previously.

There was no cause to think that there would be the slightest difficulty in bringing the crime home to Worrell, and when the day came for the adjourned magisterial inquiry it was certain that he would be at once committed to take his trial, indicted for the murder of George Carter in the copse of Lesney Hall, Erith, in the county of Kent.

Many reporters were present, for by this time the crime, so awful in its details, had created unusual interest, and the fullest accounts were looked forward to.

The court opened, and it was evident that there was a hitch somewhere On the justices taking their seats, to their astonishment and that of everybody present, it was notified that Thomas Cartwright Worrell, charged with the murder of George Carter, had committed suicide in the cell of the police-station by taking poison, which he must have had concealed about his person when arrested.

There was a great fuss made about this premature finish to the crime, and the police were reprimanded for not having been more careful in their search. The wretched man died with a lie upon his lips and left a short note declaring his innocence. But the facts were too strong against him, and a coroner's verdict against the dead man for murder was returned, whilst the jury who sat on the inquest upon his body brought in a verdict of felo de se, and the body of the murderer was consigned to earth without religious ceremony, whilst if ever a soul was lost it was that of Thomas Cartwright Worrell, the cruel, cold-blooded murderer of his friend, George Carter.

He Wouldn't Want It Again.

A CELEBRATED preacher and divine, named Mr. Harness, was once visiting a prison chaplain, and asked whether his long service in the ministry of the Lord had met with success. The chaplain replied, "With very little, I grieve to say. A short time ago I thought I had brought to a better state of mind a man who had attempted to murder a woman and was condemned to death. He showed great contrition and the dawnings of grace. I gave him a Bible, and he read it most assiduously, quoting passages confirming his own sense of his heinous transgressions. There was such a manifest change of heart and life in the poor penitent that I exerted myself to the utmost and got him a commutation of sentence, and went to inform him of my success. His gratitude was overwhelming. He called me his preserver, his deliverer, and then exclaimed, grasping my hand most warmly, 'And here is your Bible. I may as well return it to you, for I hope I shall never want it again.'"

He Was Grateful, if Guilty.

PLUMER WARD once defended a prisoner at the York Assizes, who was charged with horse-stealing, which was then a capital crime. In those days counsel was not permitted to address the court, but he was greatly tolerated in his cross-examination of the prosecuting witnesses. Ward did this with great skill, and so bewildered and twisted the witnesses that the jury acquitted the prisoner. He was travelling to London at the conclusion of the Assizes, by the stage-coach, and saw sitting opposite to him the prisoner he had so recently successfully defended. At last their eyes met, and the man jumped up, grasped Mr. Ward's hands, and said, "I'm mooch obloiged to you, Counsellor Ward—I'm mooch obloiged to you; boot"—with a knowing wink—"I doot I was guilty though."

THE MURDER BY MERCED.

"Murder, you are welcome here."
—SHAKESPEARE,
"Titus Andronicus," Act V., Sc. 2.

MERCED felt very happy in her new situation. Certainly the situation was lonely, and the society circumscribed within narrow limits, but Mrs. Lance Fowler, although infirm, and on occasions querulous with age, was a uniformly kind and considerate mistress. Merced, whose Christian name was Amy, had entered the old lady's service in the capacity of personal domestic. The young girl who is destined to enact the most important rôle in the tragedy we propose to recount—a tragedy which fifty years ago shocked and revolted the entire civilised world—was in herself pretty and attractive, but her birth had been unfortunate, and her education had been conducted in somewhat dubious seminaries. Her mother was a Spanish dancer, and her father—but his identity has always been uncertain.

The first scene of childhood that Merced could with any accuracy remember, was a disreputable drinking-house, where drunken sailors danced with painted women to the strains of an old, battered, gimcrack piano. Little Merced used to sit on a barrel and sing songs to the company, drink out of the women's glasses, and occasionally take a sip out of a sailor's pewter.

Having graduated in such a university of vice and depravity, it is wonderful that Merced retained any remnants of decency—it would be too much to ask of her virtue. But such was, in fact, the case, and some charitable persons being struck by the girl's modest air—we use the word modest in a comparative sense—when she was fifteen years of age removed her from the nursery of crime into a harbourage provided for the unfortunate by the Sisters of Charity.

It was from this refuge that Merced was taken by Mrs. Lance Fowler. That benevolent and eccentric old lady, requiring a personal domestic, sent to the Sisters, requesting them, should they have any likely candidates for the situation, to forward them to her house in Havana. Several girls of good character and domestic experience passed before the critical eyes of Mrs. Lance Fowler before Merced—considered by the Sisters to have little or no chance of obtaining the situation—appeared on the scene.

Merced was perfectly aware of the fact that her character was not spotless, and she was equally cognisant of the derision her candidature for the post inspired in her fellows. This made her a little haughty and defiant in her demeanour. Mrs. Lance Fowler she found to be an old lady with snow-white hair, resting on a crutch. She was very tall and very thin, her cheeks were sunken, but her eyes brilliant.

"So you want to be my maid, little one?" she said to Merced.

"Yes, madam."

"What is your name?"

"Amy—Amy Merced."

"I shall call you Merced. You do not mind?"

"Mind! I mind nothing so long as you will take me."

"Ah, that is well said! Do you want to be my maid, then, very much?"

"Yes, very much."

"You are tired of the charitable Sisters?"

"They are very good, but I *am* tired."

"You will tire of me in turn."

"Oh, never!"

The old lady laughed somewhat bitterly.

"So they all say—so they all say," she murmured, more to herself than the girl, and then, turning swiftly to the latter, and raising her voice, she added, "You amuse me. You will do."

"Am I really to come, then?"

"Certainly."

"Oh, how lovely! Can I come at once?"

"Yes, to-morrow."

Merced left the apartment in a trance of delight, her large black eyes flashed with pride and pleasure, and her olive cheeks were incarnadined with a deep crimson.

"What is the matter with you?" asked the other girls.

"I am highly amused, that is all."

"Amused! And, pray, what at?"

"At you, my good friends. I am accepted; I go to-morrow."

"Upon my word, the old lady has fine taste!"

"That is exactly what I thought."

Merced did not waste further thought or speech on her discomfited companions, but hastened to prepare her slight baggage for the morrow's journey.

When this history opens, we find her an inmate of Mrs. Lance Fowler's house, and very happy in her new situation. She was happy because she had already received a great deal of attention from the male members of the household, which promised adventure, excitement, and intrigue.

Merced, although if judged by classical standards by no means a beauty, was a curiously attractive girl. Her limbs were small, but well-rounded, her face oval-shaped and very smooth and soft, her eyes large, black, and expressive, and her hair fell down in a prodigal profusion of ebon ringlets on to her plump, white little shoulders. By nature she loved courtship, amorous dalliance and adventures of the heart, and her greatest happiness was to exercise her power over man.

Now, in the household of Mrs. Lance Fowler there was an English coachman, who, it was reputed, could ride or drive any horse in the confines of this planet, no matter what might be its temper and previous training. He was certainly a master in equestrian skill, and, moreover, he was perhaps the handsomest man in Havana.

The man's antecedents were doubtful; he had the manners of a gentleman, and the thirst owned by common repute by the fish. Rumour hinted at high birth, extravagances, accumulated debts, and, finally, a fall from the exalted altitude of honourable intent, resulting in outlawry from his native land and the coachman's whip. Rumour may have exaggerated, as rumour frequently does, but, truth to tell, the man bore in his person unmistakable evidence of a past condition higher in the social scale than his present avocation, but he never drew the veil—not even in moments of inebriated confidence—which shrouded his past, and cracked his whip as though nature had intended him to be, and he had always been nothing more nor less than a coachman.

He called himself Wilson, and by his familiars "Jock" was added to his nomenclature.

Merced had not been in Mrs. Lance Fowler's service a day before she noticed Wilson's handsome face and agreeable manners. Wilson returned the compliment, and contrived to squeeze Merced's hand in the first hour of their acquaintanceship. But he was not destined to enjoy an open field in the courtship of the pretty servingmaid. Another Richmond appeared upon the scene.

Mrs. Lance Fowler was, as we have already said, an eccentric lady, very whimsical in her tastes (witness her sudden and unaccountable affection for Merced), and, instead of seeking the advice of a reputable physician for any chance ailments which might befall her, she pinned her faith to a half-breed quack named Guovero.

Unfortunately this mulatto was a professional poisoner, although at present it was to his interest to preserve rather than destroy his wealthy client's life.

The moment this worthy set eyes upon Merced he marked her down a victim to his lust.

Merced smiled when she saw his great black eyes rolling in their sockets, and his white teeth biting into his blubber lips: it was such a compliment to her beauty. But, for all that, she hardly gave the man a thought, because her whole

heart was at present absorbed with the image of the handsome Wilson.

When Merced had been an inmate of Mrs. Lance Fowler's house some three weeks matters were precipitated into a crisis.

The old lady of the establishment sent summarily for Merced.

"Child," said she, "I am going to be very ill."

"God forbid!"

"God wills it."

"But how do you know?"

"I am certain."

"But——"

"Do not pester me with questions, child. I shall be very ill. Send at once for Dr. Guovero."

Merced hastened to Wilson.

"Summon Dr. Guovero at once," said she; "my mistress says she will be very ill."

The handsome coachman burst out laughing.

"If she is ill Guovero won't do her much good!"

"Why do you say that?"

"Because, dearest Merced, the amiable Guovero is nothing but a quack. We see plenty of his kidney in my country at village fairs, and we duck 'em in the horse-pond."

"We both have our secrets."

Wilson strode towards the door, and as he went out gave Merced a little kiss.

"Ah! naughty!" said she.

"You would have thought me a fool if I hadn't," he replied, and departed. He returned an hour later with Dr. Guovero, smiling and urbane as ever.

"Damn that nigger!" said Wilson, "he positively eats Merced up with his eyes."

The "physician," for so we must call him, was closeted with Mrs. Lance Fowler over half-an-hour, when that lady rang the bell violently for Merced.

"My dear," said the old lady, when the girl appeared, "I was right—I am going to be very ill."

Merced was astonished. In her own mind she had been perfectly sure that Mrs. Lance Fowler had nothing ailing her beyond a slight headache.

"My lady, I am sorry."

"I know that, Merced; you are a good child."

"What is to be done?"

"All that can be done for me will be done. Dr. Guovero will stay here all night, and you must prepare him a room."

"Yes; I dare not leave the house whilst this dear lady is in her present condition," added Guovero.

Merced said nothing, but thought a great deal.

"There is one other thing, Merced; you must send Wilson for my lawyer. I must make my will—I may not live."

Merced hurried downstairs and imparted all this news to Wilson. The coachman whistled when he heard the will mentioned.

"The old lady will certainly die," said he.

"Good God! why do you say that?"

"If she leaves anything to Guovero he will poison her."

"Poison!"

"Why, dearest Merced, Guovero is a professional poisoner. He has accounted for more people than you or I could count."

"But why is he not arrested?"

"He has never yet been found out. None of his clients would dare to give him away."

Merced sent the housemaid to prepare a bedroom for the "physician." In due time Wilson returned with the lawyer. After a time Merced was summoned to her room. The lawyer and the doctor were present.

"I have left you a thousand pounds in my will, Merced," said Mrs. Lance Fowler, from the couch; "so you will always be good to me, won't you?"

"Oh, my dear mistress, what——"

"Peace, peace! I want no thanks; I am too ill to listen to them. Be a good child and go."

Merced fled from the room bewildered by the news. A thousand pounds to come to her at Mrs. Lance Fowler's death! Why, if it was not very wicked she would almost wish that Guovero was right, and that her mistress was very ill!

The lawyer met the girl on the staircase, and, as she was now a person of importance, he chose to be communicative.

"I fancy our friend Guovero is disappointed, eh?"

"How so, sir?"

"Well, he expected a nice little legacy, and he's got simply nothing."

Merced repeated this to Wilson.

"The old lady is wiser than I thought she was," he said.

In truth, Guovero was grievously disappointed, but he did not allow that to interfere with his present plans, which aimed at nothing more nor less than the seduction of Merced. This had caused him to delude Mrs. Fowler into the belief that her illness necessitated his presence in the house all night.

He took dinner alone in the large, sumptuously-furnished dining-room. Merced had cause to enter the room, and he detained her at once.

"Don't run away, pretty one," said he.

"I must, Dr. Gouvero," she answered, ignoring his tone.

"You are unkind."

"I do not understand you."

The mulatto rose from his chair and caught her in his arms.

"Let me go at once!" cried Merced, who felt very demure, because the man who had his arms about her was hideously ugly.

Guovero gave her a kiss and let her go.

She ran away, laughing, and informed Wilson, who flew into a high temper. But neither of them could afford to quarrel openly with Guovero, for fear of incurring, under his misrepresentations, Mrs. Lance Fowler's displeasure.

At last the night came, and with it adventures.

Once in the seclusion of his room Guovero waited until every light in the house had been extinguished, and its inmates were—or should have been—all wrapt in sleep. Then he stole out, and, with noiseless footsteps, crept in the direction of Merced's bedroom. He had acquainted himself with the neighbourhood of this apartment in the day-time.

He reached the door, and deftly turned the handle with the ease and quietude of an accomplished thief. He closed it behind him and strode towards the bed, whereon he could just discern the form of Merced. He was seized from behind by a pair of strong, masculine arms. A cry started to his lips, but prudence hushed it.

"Strike a light, Merced, and let us look at the doctor's face," said Wilson, for he it was who had so unceremoniously interrupted the mulatto's plans.

Merced sprang from the bed, lighted a candle, and held it up to Guovero's face, livid, and twitching with rage and passion.

"Well, doctor, I don't suppose you expected to meet me here," said Wilson, with a grin.

"You are right, I did not," answered Guovero, recovering his habitual coolness. "Now, let me go."

"Well, you are——"

"Yes, I am very cool. I came here—you know what for. You have forestalled me. It is the fortune of war. I wish you good night."

Wilson and Merced, trembling in a loose night robe, were amazed at Guovero's manner of taking his defeat.

The mulatto turned and walked calmly towards the door.

"We both have our secrets," said he; "we will both keep silence. Otherwise, we are both liable to instant dismissal. Good night; I wish you joy."

He returned to his own room and slept soundly on the day's discomfitures.

* * * * * *

Three months after the above adventure, Merced found herself to be enceinte. She was terrified, because she was perfectly aware that should her mistress discover her condition it would mean ruin and instant dismissal. Wilson and she had repeatedly quarrelled, and the girl had taken to herself other masters, besides which, the inherent wickedness of her disposition, the inheritance of vice bequeathed to her by unknown parents, which had slept dormant in her bosom for some years, awoke and began to spread devastation within her soul. Another woman servant in the house, named Allen, finding in Merced a kindred spirit, had poured the poison of her thoughts constantly into the girl's receptive mind. Under this evil influence the degeneration of Merced was rapid.

"It will ruin me up at the house."

"Most certainly."

"I shall lose my thousand pounds."

"Assuredly."

"I must not."

"Well?"

"I want you to help me to gain it at once. Will you?"

The mulatto smiled.

"You want Mrs. Lance Fowler to die?"

The girl shuddered. "Yes, yes, that is it"

"It is a dangerous game to play."

"Will you help me?"

"What do I get?"

"Half; five hundred pounds."

"Very well; it is agreed. But we must be cautious."

Now Guovero could, had he so wished, have shown Merced an easier and less criminal way out of her first difficulty—i.e., her pregnancy. He could have suggested a thousand and one remedies, of which he was a master, to procure abortion; but this did not fit in with his own plans.

IT WAS DASHED OUT OF HIS HANDS BY MERCED.

The position of Merced was unenviable. Should her condition be discovered by Mrs. Lance Fowler, she would be dismissed without a character—that is to say, ruined; besides which she would be robbed of her prospective thousand pounds, the attainment of which now constituted her greatest desire. With a thousand pounds, she rightly argued, a girl of her calibre could do anything. What was to be done? She did not intend to abandon all her bright hopes without a fight and a struggle. If only Mrs. Lance Fowler would die, all would be well. Ah, that was it, if only the old lady would die! The worst of it was that she appeared to be in uncommonly good health, and the chance of her early demise consequently remote.

A terrible thought flashed into Merced's brain. For some time it frightened her, and she strove her utmost to banish it from the precincts of her intellect. But the thought returned obstinately, and at last custom bred contempt, and Merced determined to attempt to put her hideous design into execution. Accordingly, she paid a secret visit to Guovero. She found him pleasant and smiling, but surprised at her visit. Merced went straight to the point.

"I have come to you because I am going to have a child."

"Ah, I see."

He gave Merced a small phial, which she could easily secrete in her dress. The phial he filled with an arsenical preparation, and instructed Merced to pour a few drops carefully into all Mrs. Lance Fowler's food, so that she would be poisoned slowly, and her death lingering, which would avert suspicion.

Merced returned, and, with the help of the woman Allen, started on her horrible design. The next morning Mrs. Lance Fowler was ill, and complained of pains in the region of the abdomen. Guovero was summoned, and having prescribed some harmless concoction, interviewed Merced in private. He took down the patient's symptoms, and prescribed a larger dose during the day.

On the following day Merced's mistress's condition was appreciably worse. Guovero was now constantly in attendance, and under his supervision the arsenic invariably found its way into the old lady's food.

One day she left some soup, and this being removed, Wilson was about to pour the tureen into his plate, when it was dashed out of his hands by Merced.

"What does this mean?" he cried.

"You must not touch that."

"Why?"

"Because—well, because you mustn't."

Wilson turned and caught the girl by the wrist.

"Tell me, what does this mean?" he said.

"Nothing."

"What's wrong with that soup?"

"Nothing."

"You lie! It's poisoned!"

Merced burst out crying.

"Now, look here," said Wilson, "how much do you propose to get out of this?"

"Five hundred pounds."

"Why not a thousand?"

Seeing the tone he took, Merced brightened up.

"Because Guovero is to have half."

"Nonsense! I'll make a bargain with you."

"What is it?"

"Marry me, and keep the thousand."

"You really mean it?"

"I do."

"But what about Guovero?"

"Leave him to me; let him finish the job first."

The murderers' plans prospered.

Guovero, however, was all for caution and patience, and even went so far as to supply Mrs. Lance Fowler with medicine of a partially antidotal character. But Merced and Wilson grew daily more impatient, and at last the former disregarded the "physician's" orders, and emptied half the phial into her mistress's soup.

Mrs. Lance Fowler was seized with horrible convulsions and died in the extremity of agony.

The thousand pounds were Merced's! Although the girl assumed a sorrow-stricken manner in the death-chamber, the moment she was by herself she could hardly contain herself for joy.

At last she would be rich and happy! At last she would be her own mistress and be able to visit Europe! At last!

The successful conspirators were gathered together in state after the funeral, waiting for the will to be read. The lawyer read the will, and in a short time Merced received her thousand pounds.

Then it was that she and Wilson declined to part with a portion of their booty to Guovero and the woman Allen, who also claimed a small share. A terrible quarrel ensued, but Wilson and his paramour judged Guovero and Allen to be too deeply implicated in the crime for them to attempt any exposure.

Their judgment proved faulty. When Wilson and Merced were preparing to leave Havana for fairer climes and distant shores they were stopped by a police officer.

"What do you want?" cried Wilson roughly, for Merced was dumb with terror.

"I arrest you both on suspicion of being concerned in the murder of Mrs. Lance Fowler."

"Murder!"

"We think so. An acquaintance of yours named Allen has confessed all."

"Curse her!" screamed Merced.

Guovero had been already apprehended, and the trio were tried together a month later on the murder charge. The body of the dead woman had been exhumed, and a quantity of arsenical poison found in the abdomen. This, together with the evidence of the women Allen, proved sufficient for the purposes of the prosecution.

Seeing all was over, Merced confessed.

"I did not wish to do it," she cried; "indeed, I never did! I am not really wicked. It was this man Guovero—he did it—he made me give the poison!"

Guovero, on his part, made much the same statement, but all the prayers and confessions of the wretched criminals were unavailing.

They were sentenced to death. Wilson was doomed to spend ten years in a Havana chain-gang, and Allen also received a heavy term of imprisonment.

Merced declared again and again that she was enceinte, but her declarations were unheeded, and she was led, with her companion in guilt, Guovero, to the place of execution.

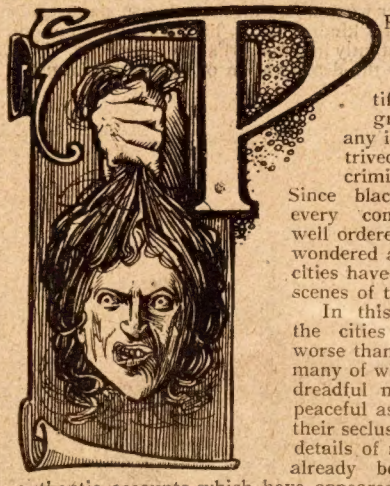
The wretched woman and the physician were garrotted in the presence of Wilson and Allen.

We have only one quarrel with the justice of this sentence.

If Merced was enceinte, as she repeatedly avowed, and as we believe she was, then the unborn innocent perished for its mother's guilt.

With regard to the execution of unborn children, one cannot but feel a thrill of pity for the poor little being thus summarily cut off from the world before it has been endowed with a separate existence, but perhaps it is better so than that it should be left to grow up with the taint of hereditary sin in its soul.

TOWNS AND THEIR FAMOUS CRIMES.



PRACTICALLY every great town has at one time or another been identified with some great crime. None of any importance has contrived to escape the criminal contagion. Since black sheep exist in every community, however well ordered, it is not to be wondered at that the bigger cities have been so often the scenes of the darkest deeds.

In this respect, however, the cities are no better or worse than the villages, very many of which have witnessed dreadful murders, calm and peaceful as they may seem in their seclusion and repose. The details of many of these have already been given in the authentic accounts which have appeared in this work, and many have yet to be given. I do not propose in this brief article retracing my steps across the paths of crime, the details of which my readers are probably familiar with, but it may not be without interest to point out those towns which have, apart from their other claims to consideration, contributed to the records of criminology of the last one hundred years. The history of great crime in London alone, dealt with in any detail, would fill volume upon volume, and I have not space enough here to enumerate even one-hundredth part of the mysteries and murderers with which the vast Metropolis has been identified. Of purely London crimes, the cases of the Mannings, of the mysterious being known as Jack-the-Ripper, of Wainwright, Courvoisier, John Williams—the Ratcliffe Highway monster—Hocker, Bishop and Williams, Thurtell, Youngman, Walter Miller and Mullins have, perhaps, excited the keenest interest and provoked the most sensation.

How many persons know anything of Rugely beside the fact that Palmer, the doyen of poisoners, made that Staffordshire town his home? In 1855 the eyes of the whole of England were turned upon that quiet and rather sleepy market-town, in spite of the counter-attractions in the way of interest provided by a policy of folly in the Crimea.

Leicester can boast of several criminal sensations, but I suppose that the slaying and burning of Mr. Paas by James Cook—a case that has been fully described in these columns—constitutes the town's "biggest thing" in this connection. Near Leicester is Melton Mowbray, where a brute named Brown, a tramp, murdered the old toll-keeper and his little grandson for some trifling gain, and this desperado was hanged outside the county gaol, a huge, barrack-like building just on the outskirts of the town where the Wigston Road commences.

Northampton is some thirty miles from Leicester, and likewise has its great crime to boast of. At the boot-and-shoe town occurred a mysterious murder in 1891, for which a man named Prichard suffered execution. The shop where this barbarous crime was perpetrated was situated close to the post-office, and overlooked the back of the theatre.

Manchester is mostly identified with the Fenian attack on the police van, which resulted in several men being hanged, and here also occurred the murder of Mr. Mellor by the man Taylor, who had previously killed all his own children. The infamous William Fish brought upon Blackburn in 1876 an unenviable notoriety, and that extraordinary criminal, Deeming, conferred the same horrid distinction

upon Rainhill, a town near St. Helens. Of other Lancashire towns, Birkenhead has its mysterious and undiscovered murder, a watchman of the post-office having been brutally done to death one Sunday night in 1900; while Oldham has not quite forgotten the discovery of the bodies of two men—foully murdered—at a lonely inn on the desolate moors outside the town in 1837. In this case, too, the miscreants were never discovered.

Liverpool offers the student of crime the cases of Gleeson, Wilson, Miller, and Conway to choose from, besides many minor tragedies, and the great seaport town has had more than her share of such fearful events, as her records prove. Her neighbour, Chester, has been free from any sensational crime of violence, but has been the scene of many executions.

Norwich still shudders at the deeds of Rush and Sheward committed in her midst, as it were, and this quaint old town, like Ipswich—where Gardiner was first tried for the Peasenhall murder—has many such sanguinary records. In the case of Gardiner, the second trial took place at Bury St. Edmunds, always identified with the trial and execution of William Corder, hanged in 1828 for the "Red Barn" murder. Reading will always be associated with the fell deeds of Mrs. Dyer, a sort of female Herod, with a perfect passion for slaughtering innocents, and the name Richmond had quite a sinister significance after Kate Webster's murder and mutilation of Mrs. Thomas at the fashionable river-side town. Another Thames-side place associated with a great crime is Eton, where resided the victim of Tawell, the Quaker, who was the first murderer apprehended by means of the telegraph.

Hoddesdon, in Hertfordshire, was the scene of the sanguinary exploits of a human ghoul named Thomas Simmons, nicknamed the "Man of Blood," in 1808. I really forget for the moment how many poor souls this miscreant sent to their account or what was his motive for such wholesale slaughter. One or two, more or less, is no great matter, for the names of his victims were legion—being so many! Simmons ran amok for about five minutes, during which brief period he appears to have successfully exterminated a couple of families, or, at least, the feminine portion thereof. I wonder how many residents of this growing district have ever heard of the deeds of the amiable Simmons.

Polested, a village not many miles from Colchester, is, of course, sacred to the memory of William Corder, whose murder of Maria Martin in 1827 is familiar in our mouths as household words. Everyone has heard of the Red Barn at Polested and knows something of the tragedy enacted there. Like Miss Braddon, who mentions this remarkable case in one of her clever novels, I have been shown the field in which this ill-omened building stood, though the barn itself was done away with many years before, and many of the present-day villagers are uncertain where it stood.

Hertfordshire's best criminal village was Elstree, near which place resided in 1823 the infamous Probert, who was concerned with Thurtell and Hunt in the barbarous murder of Mr. Weare. The cottage in which the murderers supped and sang and slept after committing the deed was demolished some few years ago, I believe, but I have seen the pond in which the body of the victim was thrown and his grave in Elstree churchyard. To this day Gill's Hill Lane—the actual scene of the murder—bears an uncanny and sinister aspect, and passing through its gloomy glades one can imagine the dark deed perpetrated therein all those years ago. The gig in which Thurtell drove down his victim to the place of his death was exhibited about the time of the trial in a drama, entitled "The Gamblers," at the Surrey Theatre, in Blackfriars Road, and the play in question, which was founded on this sensational crime was the subject of much discussion at that period.

The case of Daniel Good has been fully related in these columns, but not many persons may be aware that the stables of Granard Lodge, Roehampton, in which the murder was committed, remain to this day precisely as they were in 1842. One can picture Good fleeing across the open fields, which still face these stables, towards Putney that dark spring night, and gaze at the harness-room in which he had boiled the body of his victim.

Eltham, where the late Colonel North's place was, is associated with the mysterious murder of Jane Maria Clonsen, a young woman, who was discovered in a dark lane there with her throat cut in 1871. Circumstances pointed to a man named Pook as the murderer, and for a long time things looked very black against him. However, he was found not guilty at the trial and must be accounted innocent, so that the death of Jane Clonsen still remains unavenged.

Leaves from Our Notebook.

Jack Ketch's Responsibility.

A MAN named William Turner was condemned to death for murder, and from the time of his arrest he loudly and earnestly protested his entire innocence of the crime. When he arrived at the place of execution and Jack Ketch was adjusting the rope round his neck, the unfortunate man made a final appeal, and with great earnestness assured the hangman that there must be some huge mistake, as he had never committed the crime with which he had been charged, and that, therefore, there could be no legal warrant for his death. To this Ketch replied, "Put your neck into this, and you can complain against me if I am wrong; you know I act under a heavy responsibility."

The Disappearing Banknotes.

AN old and wealthy merchant of Glasgow, named Archibald Fraser, was in the habit of counting his money near an open window during the warm summer months, and this had been seen by a smart thief who was a well-known character in Glasgow at the time. The merchant invariably had a great many coins and notes spread out on the table before him on these occasions, and the thief referred to, after having watched him for some time, decided to relieve the old gentleman of the responsibility of looking after so much money by taking it for his own use. He accordingly procured a fishing-rod, and on the next occasion of the merchant's counting operations he was horrified to see two of the biggest notes suddenly whisked off the table at the end of a stick and disappear out of the window. Before the merchant could recover from his astonishment and reach the door to pursue the thief the slippery note-stealer had made good his escape, leaving nothing behind him except a small box of bird-lime which he had used to smear the end of the fishing-rod.

A Horrible Experiment.

IN the year 1803, the discovery of galvanism was the talk of the day, and people were anxious to hear anything relating to the new power which was to work such wonders. Professor Aldini, nephew of the discoverer, together with some other philosophers, were anxious to test the virtues of the new agent on the dead body of a man as soon as he had been cut down after execution, and for this purpose obtained the body of a notorious criminal named Foster, who had been hanged for the murder of his wife and child. At the first application of the galvanic current the jaw of the dead man began to quiver most violently, the adjoining muscles were fearfully contorted, and one eye actually opened, and fixed a glassy stare on the operator, as if resenting his interference with the corpse's repose. As the current was increased and applied to other parts of the body, the right hand was raised in a threatening manner, the fist clenched, and the legs and thighs made most peculiar movements. A Mr. Pass, the beadle of Surgeons' Hall, who was present, dropped dead from fright, and some of the spectators became so excited that they cried out, "He's coming to life again!" They were, however, told that this was impossible, and the failure to restore the man to life was very good-naturedly attributed to the fact that the culprit's neck had been broken by his friend violently pulling his legs whilst he was hanging, in order to put a speedy end to his sufferings.

Replies to Queries

M. H. HASTINGS.—Very many thanks for your kind letter.

CONSTANT READER (Longmoor Camp).—There is no fixed law upon the subject.

A CONSTANT READER.—King Edward's real name in private life is Edward Wettin, Esq.

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